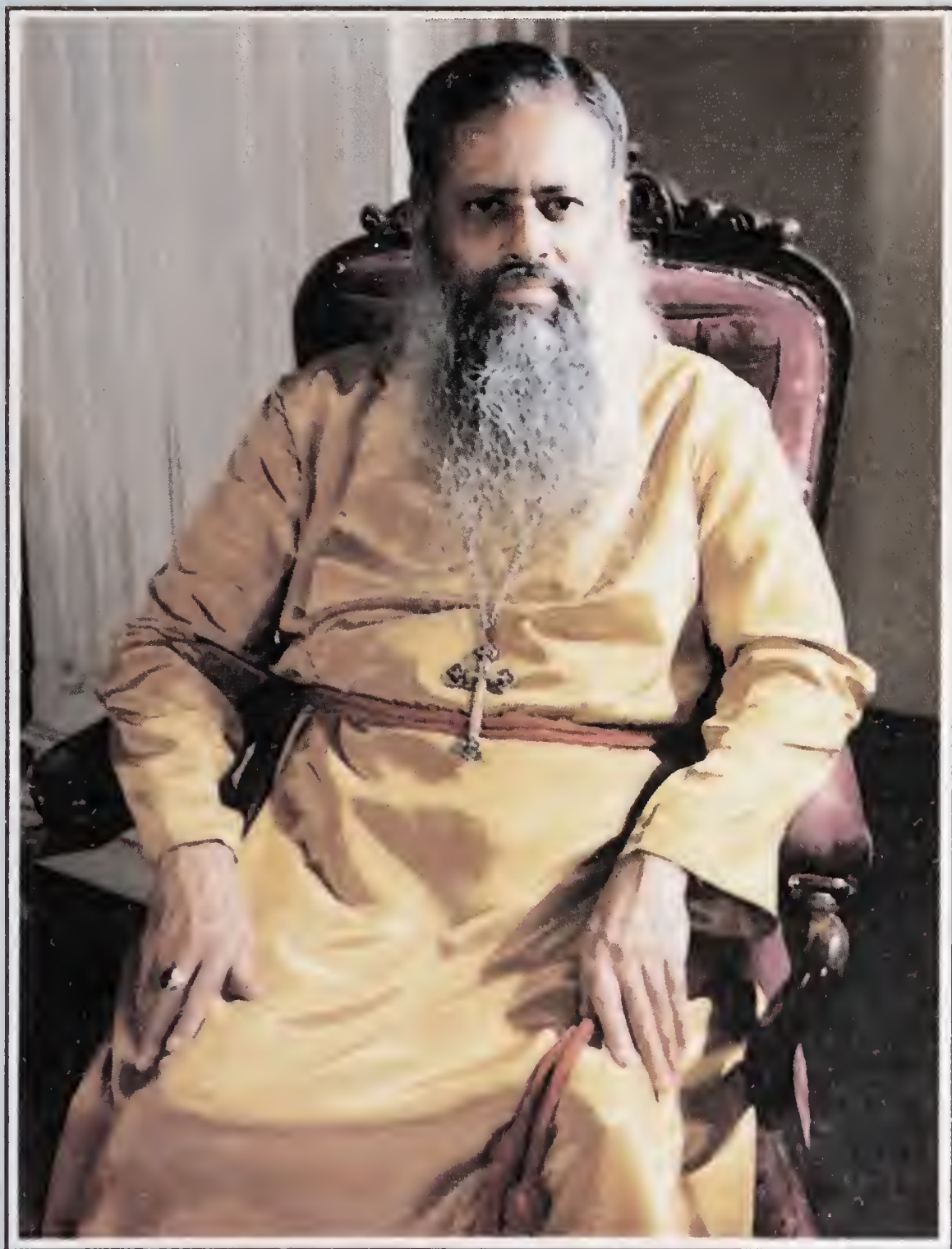


JOY TO THE WORLD



MAR APREM

BOOKS BY Dr. MAR APREM

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| 2 Mar Abimalek Timotheus-A Biography | pp. 282, 1975 |
| 3 Mar Abdisho Thondenat | pp. 136, 1987 |
| 4 Strange But True: An Autobiography | pp. 236, 1981 |
| 5 Not So Strange: ,, ,, Part II | pp. 236, 1991 |

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TOY TO THE WORLD

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Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that (s)he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

JOY TO THE WORLD

A Companion volume to

1. BISHOP'S JOKES
2. LAUGH WITH THE BISHOP
3. LAUGH TO HEALTH
4. HOLY HUMOUR

MAR APREM

1994

JOY TO THE WORLD

(English) (Humour)

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FOREWORD

Bertrand Russell writing in the Preface to the entitled *Bertrand Russell's Best* expresses a desire, volume which one may hope can be read without pain without excessive mental exertion, seem to be admirable. Lord Russell further wrote, "I should not wish to thought in earnest only when I am solemn."

Russell is right when he records:

"What is most lacking in the modern world is genial, good-natured tolerance; and what is most hostile to this is a harsh and dogmatic morality which condemns the majority of the human race as reprobates. Against solemnity, the best weapon is wit."

When one samples Dr. Mar Aprém's books on humour one is satisfied that religious humour is not a commodity in that short supply as many of us often seem to think. His humorous works have already brought laurels for the writer.

Joy to the World is the 45th book of Dr. Mar Aprém's Metropolitan. It is the 5th in his humour series. He has already attained international acclaim. His jokes have been quoted around the globe.

Russian translation of his first two humour books translated by Professor Konstantin Matveev of Moscow was released by the Minister of National Affairs of Russia in September 1992 at the prestigious Russian Academy of Science.

This volume of 130 hilarious jokes is written without judice or malice to anyone. They are simple and innocent jokes. All readers even outside the Christian circles do often quote the stories contained in the works of this jovial archbishop. This religious dignitary has travelled in many countries and made the life of many people happier.

C. S. Lewis, the famous Cambridge Professor, was a brilliant and a witty interpreter of the Christian faith. In his book *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis writes of a load of assorted ghosts on a fantastic bus ride from Hell to heaven. One of them was a pompous bishop. He had a humorous conversation with one of the Bright People in heaven.

The pompous bishop claimed that he defended his views fearlessly, saying, "I preached my famous sermon. I defied the whole chapter. I took every risk."

His friend in heaven questions him, "What risk? What is at all likely to come of it except what actually came—popularity, sale for your books, invitations and finally a bishopric?"

I can say for the Most Rev. Dr. Mar APrem that the bishopric did not come as a result of his writing humour. He became a satirist only some years after he was consecrated a Metropolitan in Bagdad, Iraq on 29 September 1968.

Thiruvananthapuram,
Kerala,
May 5, 1994

A. M. Michael,
Vice-Chancellor,
Kerala Agricultural University

Introduction

Joy to the World is my fifth effort to make people laugh. The responses to the first volumes of religious satire encouraged me to write more to make people more and more happy.

A cartoon in the *SPAN* dated January 1993 made me swing into action and have "a few good laughs." The cartoon has the following caption under the picture of an old man wishing happy New Year to another old man.

"...and a Happy New Year to you, Ed, with instant relief from minor aches and pains, plenty of hot water, fresh linen, comfortable shoes, a good bed and an all-expense-paid trip for two to London as well as a substantial pay rise, sunny skies, low taxes, immediate seating and a few good laughs."

In an article in *Island*, a magazine from Bombay dated July 1993, the writer claims that K. V. Patel of Bombay is the only "laughologist", a word Patel claims to be his invention. He is the originator of "Hass Yoga." It means 'Yoga of laughing.' The technique of this Yoga lies in laughing aloud in the bath room every morning. Patel's claim that he is the only "laughologist" is likely to be laughed at by other laughter-sellers revelling in humour. It will be funny if all clowns come together and make tall claims about their capacity to make fun of each other. How strong the back bones of the funny bones are, know I not.

Fr. G. Thalian is a Catholic priest. He writes satire in Malayalam our mother tongue. We chanced to meet

common platform in 1993. It was quite refreshing to meet a likeminded clergyman. In his books of he creates some comical characters out of his imagination. They indulge in jocular or humorous conversation or commit comical mistakes leading his readers and listeners to have a hearty laugh.

In my funny books, however, I have not created fictional characters. Nevertheless, a priest or a bishop is usually at the receiving end. Some of my readers have sneaking suspicion whether some of the hilarious situations mentioned in the stories were real in my own life or in the lives of my colleagues and try for clarification.

Are really bishops to be laughed at? Did the saints and apostles actually get mixed up in embarrassing situations mentioned in these pages. The author's response is "Why not?" Bishops are human beings. They laugh with others and in turn perhaps get laughed at.

Laughter may be a luxury for many bishops who are used to be doing serious and pious functions and do not find time for actions or pronouncements in a lighter vein. Nevertheless the serious scholars and pious people need some lighter moments in their lives so that they can be saner in their busy and hectic schedule.

There have been in history some bishops who may be described simpletons out of their piety. They lived and died unaware of the wickedness of those souls entrusted to their care. They did not spot wolves among sheep, especially those in sheep's skin.

In the introduction to her lavishly illustrated *Bible Knock Knocks and other Fun Stuff* Mary Low Ca writes:

"Don't you hate it when everybody talks about the joy of the Lord—but nobody smiles?

Me, too!

We Christians are the happiest people around, right? So let's let our faces show it!

Smile!

Come on. You can do better than that."

If you can't, read through the following pages; you do not succeed to smile even after you reach the page of this slim volume, wait until I write and publish my sixth book in the series.

The author can't promise when he will have sufficient inspiration and perspiration or muster enough audacity to write next volume in a moment of emptiness. It perhaps depends on the sorrows or joys he may experience in his religious responsibilities, lifting him to the heights of ecstasy. If the first quarter century of his being the shepherd of his flock in India gave him enough courage to think and write five books on humour the second quarter may be greater in the same pasture.

I will be happy if my people laugh with me in these times of tension. I want them to be happy and smile. If it offends their neighbour or enemy they better stop smiling. Let him be happy in his moroseness.

One book I read recently is *The Best of the Good in Jokes* written by Bob Philips. The claim printed on the title is "Over 2 million Bob Philips Books Sold." Bob Philips has written over a dozen joke books. It gives the license for me to write more. I shouldn't stop with half a dozen. I cannot expect to sell 2 million copies, though.

On p. 291 of the book cited above I read the following definition of a teacher.

"Teacher: What do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

Student: A teacher."

Taking a clue from the above comment I feel the following question and answer could be relevant.

Teacher: What do you call a person who keeps on writing when people are no longer interested?

Student: An author.

Two other American books I purchased are *The Treasury of Clean Church Jokes* by Tal D. Bonham and *Wait Till You have children of your own* by Erma Bombeck & Bill Keane. The first one has no illustrations, while the second has some cartoons. Sometimes I think of drawing a few. I am not capable of drawing cartoons. I have to press into service some professionals. Maybe later. Not in the immediate future.

I purchased some other joke books too. Yet I did not get time to read and laugh. They are Tom Mullen, *Laughing Out Loud and other Religious Experiences* (London, 1989). Giving some questions for discussion,

the author wants his readers to find their own answers to his questions. pp. 20 and 21.

4. The author says humour is a gift from God. Is the ability to laugh a talent (gift) in the way a pleasant singing voice and quick reflexes are gifts? Do some people have it and some not? Or is a sense of humour a gift that all people have but some fail to develop?

5. Do you have a sense of humour? Do you laugh easily or sparingly? Why are some persons "too serious about life?"

The answers to these questions may be readily available as you flip through the pages of this book. Some of us do have this gift by nature, but fail to nurture it.

There are five more funny books in front of me which I plan to read later, maybe, after I complete this book. They are listed below.

1. Dennis R. Fakes, *Points with Punch*, Ohio, 1982.
2. Henry Cormier, *The Humour of Jesus*, New York 1982.
3. Miriam Pollard O. C. S. O., *The Laughter of God: Finding Ease with Prayer*, Delaware, 1982.
4. Charles O'Neal, *Life Ain't Easy But it can be wonderful*, Nashville, 1982.
5. Mike Tighe, *I was Afraid. I'd lose My Soul: Chocolate Malt... and Other Stories of Everyday Spirituality*. Missouri, 1990.

My readers in India are advised not to order the above books, lest you cry when you pay for it. American

Readers can perhaps read them without being hurt by the cost of those books. Even for fun you have to pay heavily. My books, however, are kept at rock bottom prices so that my efforts to make others laugh do not make my pocket bulge. Nevertheless, the reports that many are benefitted by the sheer pleasure my books offer to the public at large make me bold to write more on these lines.

The caption of this book *Joy to the World* came to my mind when I thought of a Christmas carol beginning with the words, "Joy to the world the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King....." written by Isaac Watts and set to music by George F. Handel, well known for his superb composition of *Messiah*. I desired to get this book ready by Dec. 1993 as a Christmas gift. But many other duties as well as my *Los Angeles to Tokyo* stood in the way of writing this book earlier.

I began to look for some valid justification to write satire.

Usually the persons in clerical garbs do not indulge in writing literature for laughter.

To my pleasant surprise I got the information that I was born on the birthday of a humorist whose satire excelled any other's in my mother tongue i. e., Malayalam.

He was called Sanjayan. His actual name was Manikothu Rammunny Nair. I was born on his birth day, June 13. He died when I was 3 years and 3 months old on 13 Sept. 1943. Sanjayan can be called Mark Twain of Kerala (Samuel Langhorn Clemens 1835-1910.)

I do not know whether Sanjayan had read the writings of Twain. To Sanjayan laughter was an article of faith. He was bold to write :

"Sorrow is the toxin of the soul, O fool,
And laughter the emollient of pure delight."

Sanjayan detested 'modern' poetry. He declared war against modern poets:

"I can't stand his downcast gait, vacant stare into the sky, meaningless plump in the seat, senseless exhalation, grin fit for the graveyard and thought originating in ignorance and ending in faithless suicides all of them are my enemies."

After half of this book had been printed a caustic comment of an American preacher caught my attention. Jack Van Impe, whom I do not know, scoffs at his fellow preachers :

"America has its puppetiers, rhetoricians, lecturers, humorists, and even comedians, but its need is for prophets."

One is tempted to say Amen to the above statement. Yet the place of humour in today's world should not be belittled. The readers of this humorous work are advised to use it appropriately and sparingly in their talks or sermons. Jesus Christ was not a weeping Prophet like Jeremiah all the time. Against the Pharisees he used sarcasm too. The present writer has tried to stay within the limits of decent satire without encroaching into the realm of sarcasm.

Ed Sullivan, the best known American Catholic cartoonist, has brought out an excellent cartoon collection in his book *Beyond the Stained Glass*, now available in India. The stockist of this book, the Examiners Bookshop, Bombay in its *EPB's Book World* April-May 1994 describes this book, of 90 full page hilarious cartoons as:

"Understatement, exaggeration, satire, sarcasm, wit and even an occasional—and forgivable—pun creep into Sullivan's work, but he is at his best when he presents us with his slices of life."

Despite the condemnation, out of righteous indignation of some 'holy rollers' the present writer does not think that all pious people will always shun humour and walk around like bundles of sullenness.

May this book bring joy to the many readers all over the world. I have planned the release of this book on May 10th in England where I am privileged to deliver the 10th annual lecture to the Loughborough University, Leicestershire. I do hope that the Englishmen, who are usually thought of as serious, would laugh aloud when they leaf through the pages of this book. Thanks to the Revd. David Hart, senior Anglican Chaplain of the Loughborough University, for his concurrence to release it at the University.

I am grateful to Dr. A. M. Michael, Vice Chancellor of the Kerala Agricultural University, who has added lustre to this hilarious work. He is a prominent educationist.

Hope this fun hat will keep people of all religions in good humour. I do hope that my non-Christian friends would not mistake all Christian bishops for jokers or clowns.

It is with pleasure I acknowledge the services rendered by Fr. T. O. Ignatius and the workers at the Mar Timotheos Birth Centenary Technical Training Centre in Trichur who undertook to print this book in a short period of five weeks.

Although without his permission I take this opportunity to record my appreciation and gratitude to Mr. M. John Thomas, a retired head master of a High School in my hometown, whose sharp eyes and brain helped me to eradicate some minor errors of grammar from my many books including this one.

Trichur, Kerala

April Fools' Day, 1994

MAR APREM

Shepherd's Age

An old shepherd was asked how old he was. He was very old. He couldn't remember his exact age. He was never a student at school and there was no school certificate to testify to his age.

The man replied, "I do not know how old I am. My father had written my date of birth in our family Bible. I used to look it up whenever I needed. But some twenty years ago, one of my goats ate up the first few pages of our family Bible. Thus I lost the only record of my birth date. Now I do not know for sure how old I am. One thing I know. The goat was thirty years old when it did this."

Wife's Note

Rev. John used to boast that he was a real pastor, and in need indeed. When any member of his congregation needed a visit from the pastor, he just dropped a note in the collection plate during Sunday service and he would then have the pleasure of the pastor's visit.

One Sunday morning he emphasized this point and stated unequivocally that he would visit any member of the congregation who dropped a note indicating his or her desire for his visit.

As the collection plate came back to him, Rev. John noticed and recognized a little note in a familiar feminine hand. He read, "I am one of your loneliest members and heaviest contributors. May I have a visit tomorrow evening?" It was written by his wife.

3. Undistracted

St. Bernard (1091 - 1153) was a man of prayer and a leader during the crusades. One day he was riding his horse when a young man stopped him. The young man stated that he wished that he too was a man of prayer like Bernard, so that he could ride on horseback in prayer. Bernard.

Bernard's reply was simple. He told the young man that a life of prayer was not simple or easy. To pray with concentration was not an easy exercise. Bernard promised the young man that he would present his horse to him, if he recited the Lord's prayer just once without distraction of mind. The young man accepted the challenge. He started reciting the Lord's prayer. He closed his eyes and with folded hands began to pray with full devotion, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come." Suddenly he opened his eyes and asked Bernard, "Will I get the saddle also with your horse?"

4. Moratorium

In America women are usually hesitant to tell others their age after they are 40. At birthday parties, nobody asks their age.

One day Rev. John, a married pastor, was complaining to his friend that it was terrible to grow old all the time. "But you are not alone, pastor," said the parishioner. "Your wife also is growing old like you."

"Ah, but my wife stopped growing after 40. She never had a birthday for the past twenty years or so," replied the pastor.

Just the Perfect Size

For his wife's birthday a pastor decided to buy a dress. Being a birthday present, he kept it a secret. He went to a department store and asked the lady clerk to help him purchase a dress for his wife.

The clerk asked, "What size?". He had no idea. To avoid the embarrassment of the pastor, the lady clerk asked, "Is she short or tall? Is she fat or skinny?" After thinking for a while the pastor replied, "She is just perfect size". The clerk gave him a dress of size 34. The next day the pastor's wife came alone without the knowledge of her husband and changed it for size 54.

Somnambulism

Fr. Jacob noticed that Mr. Thomas, one of his prominent parishioners, used to get up from his seat and walk out while he was about half way through in his sermon. Fr. Jacob felt sorry for Mr. Thomas, because he was missing the last part of his sermon, the conclusion.

The priest complained to Mrs. Thomas about her husband's behavior. He asked her to advise her husband not to leave in the middle of the sermon. Mrs. Thomas explained to Fr. Jacob, that her husband had nothing against the priest. The only trouble was that Mr. Thomas had a habit of walking in his sleep.

Sleeping Pills

An old man who was not getting sleep for some days went to a psychiatrist asking for a prescription for sleeping pills.

The psychiatrist who used to attend the Church regularly, asked his patient whether he attended Church on Sundays. The patient replied that he used to attend the Roman Catholic Mass regularly.

"If you have any problem of sleeplessness," said the psychiatrist, I recommend that you attend the Protestant Church which I attend. There I have seen at least a dozen people sitting and sleeping during the sermon without the help of any pill."

8. Utopia

A witty French bishop was once asked why he never visited a country home which he seldom visited. "Do you know", he replied, "that I must have some place where I can go though I never go to it, I can always imagine that I am in a place where I might be happier than where I am."

9. Spare Diet

A bishop who was a diabetic for 16 years was advised by his doctor to diet. He was asked to eat as little as possible. He was supposed to reduce weight from 100 kilos to 70 kilos. The bishop was afraid of his life being cut off if the sugar level in his blood which was already very high remained over 300.

The bishop decided to eat less. Soon he was invited to dine with one of his rich friends. He saw the table laid with a lot of appetising food. He was tempted to forget the advice of his doctor. Yet, he wanted to stick to his decision. Therefore he said to his hostess;

"You see, I am a diabetic patient. My doctor advised me to eat less than what I have been eating. So please don't serve me soup or bread. I will opt for just a cup of ice cream with a lot of chocolate cream on top of it. I don't mind it in a big bowl instead of a small cup, as I do not eat anything else".

10. Send a Substitute

A bishop who was a strict disciplinarian informed all clergy under his care to inform him by letter or by telegram whenever they had to leave the parish. This he said, was necessary for making substitute arrangements when the priests were on leave.

One priest's wife died and this priest sent a telegram to the bishop, which caused considerable embarrassment to the bishop. The telegram read:

"My wife expired today. Send substitute."

11. Situation Vacant

A clever woman asked a smart bishop: "Bishop, we usually say that marriages are made in heaven. But our priest says that no marriage actually takes place in heaven. Can you tell me why?"

The bishop, renowned for his trenchant humour, replied with a gesture of jest: "I think that there are no women up there." The lady quipped, "I think that there are plenty of beautiful women in heaven, but maybe they can't find a priest or a bishop to bless the marriage up there."

12. Comparatively Older

"Why are you dying your hair and not your mustache? This looks awkward. Your mustache is white while your hair is black. If you want to dye, do both the hair and the mustache,?" said a caring wife to her husband.

The husband remarked "I have heard that women lack wisdom. They give advice to their husbands. I think it makes no sense some times. You said that I should dye both hair and mustache. But you see my hair is 60 years old; my mustache is 21 years younger. That is why I started with my hair. I shall dye my mustache when I am 81. You see I started growing my mustache only at the age of 21."

13. House Full

In India many people ride bicycles. These are not motor cycles. They are meant for one-passenger-only. Double riding is not safe. Nevertheless, some people accommodate another passenger who will sit on the "carrier" meant to keep small bags, books or such light luggage.

The government prohibited additional passengers on these ordinary bicycles. Many people obliged. The present writer when he was a student in Jabalpur occasionally went to Church on the "carrier" of his friends' bicycles. But he was obliged to salute a police man who happened to be at the traffic post. In some cases he had to jump down at the traffic post and then mount the back of the bicycle one minute later to pay respect to the law keepers of the land.

One day a priest was going to Church. As he saw a boy from the Church Choir walking, he offered him a "lift" on the carrier of his bicycle. At the traffic post, a police man stopped them. The priest said, "Oh, there is already one man at the back. I cannot take you too. There is no room for one more."

4. Memory Test

When a woman named Jane insisted that her husband attend Church service on Christmas eve, he reluctantly consented to accompany her to Church. As he did not know the route to the Church he asked his wife to drive the car.

After the service, the pastor greeted the worshippers at the door of the Church as usual. The pastor said: "Hello, Jane, today I am glad that you have brought your husband to the Church." The pastor did not ask his name to avoid embarrassment to her husband as well as himself. After the couple reached the car the husband began to accuse the pastor for not knowing his name. The pious wife asserted: "No, you cannot blame the pastor for not knowing your name. You did not even know where the Church was. Isn't that why you asked me to drive?"

5. Remedial Teaching

There was a foreign bishop who wanted to learn English. He quickly picked up a large vocabulary, but couldn't grasp the rules of grammar. He used to say, "I do not got," "I do not went", "I do not said" etc to indicate the past actions.

Nobody dared to correct the grammatical mistakes of this foreign bishop. A young priest was appointed secretary to this bishop. The immature priest was annoyed by the incorrect English of his boss and decided to correct him. One day when the bishop started in his usual style, "I do not got newspaper today", the young priest stated, "I did not get newspaper today", "we do not get newspaper today", "They did not get newspaper today." The impatient bishop shouted, "Stop that nonsense, then tell me, if all us do not got today's newspaper where was the newspaper gone today?"

16. Yes=No

Fr. Stewart was a great scholar in many languages. He tutored himself Hebrew and Greek and mastered the Old and New Testaments in the Holy Bible. He used to preach great exegetical sermons referring to the meaning of several words in the original language.

After he completed 80 years of age, some of his friends and well-wishers advised Fr. Stewart not to continue with his scholarly discourses, because, they felt that his memory had begun to fail and his quotations were inaccurate. But the old priest was not willing to yield to the exhortations of others. He was over-confident of his erudition.

In one of his sermons Fr. Stewart quoted from the Old Testament. Unfortunately he had forgotten the negative before the main verb. A young lady who knew that verse by heart detected the omission instantly. When the sermon was over, she went to the vestry and told the priest that he had omitted the word "no" while reciting

erse. The scholarly priest could not bear the shame of such an omission detected by an ordinary woman. On a scholarly look on his face, he said, "Ah, young lady, do you know that "no" in English means "yes" in Hebrew? It is a language read from right to left. Just the opposite of English."

Till we Meet ...

When Mrs. Mathews died, her husband invited their parish priest to speak a few words at her funeral. Fr. Peter spoke for the family well. Therefore he was more than willing to oblige.

The priest delivered a beautiful funeral oration enumerating the good qualities of the deceased. At the conclusion of his speech the priest said, "May her soul rest in peace."

The sobbing husband looked up and added, "Until we meet again." The friends present at the funeral who knew that Mr. Mathews never used to give rest to his soul, repeated in a whisper, "Yes, until they meet again."

Self-Reliance

A Church which had a reputation for many active men and lay women began to dwindle after some lay members had died and others shifted to other areas. The Church committee seriously discussed the situation and decided to advertise for a pastor who could revive lay leadership in that parish.

A lively pastor in a flourishing congregation was asked to give up his comfortable pastorate and to move

to this town to take up this challenging job. His wife, who had a lucrative profession in that city resigned her job in order to help her husband to serve this parish with its many attractive perks advertised.

The new pastor began to teach his congregation right earnest. He worked over-time to educate the laity to take up positions of leadership in Christian ministry. He prepared sermon outlines and supplied them to the talented laity whom he himself picked up from his congregation. His congregation was happy and grateful. The pastor enjoyed job satisfaction. His wife, who sacrificed her decent job, told her husband, "This is the kind of parish I used to pray for. Now we are here. We should never move to another parish, even if anybody lured us with better perks."

One Sunday afternoon the best laity trained by the pastor came to him and announced, "Pastor, thank you for training us. Now we don't need a pastor for our Church. We the laity are capable of running our show."

19. Solitary Exception

A passionate preacher denounced the sins of the modern world. He repeated the words, "All have sinned." After the sermon an old man told the pastor, "You said all have sinned. But, I think, my wife's first husband is an exception."

"Why do you think so?" questioned the indignant preacher. "I do not know. But my wife keeps telling me that her first husband was much better than I am."

had never blamed her for anything," replied the intelligent husband.

One at a Time

The computer is marvelous in its capabilities. The computers will speak when it shows something on screen. Some computer dictionaries will spell out the word which appears on its screen for the benefit of students who want to learn spelling as well as pronunciation.

There is a computer-weighing-machine which acts in a similar fashion. My friend told me that once when he went to America he weighed himself on such a computer-weighing machine. The machine not only weighed 60 Kg, but also announced aloud, 'Sixty kilograms.' As he was returning he noticed a fat lady in a queue. Although he had seen some fat ladies, this one was really of unusual size. So he waited as she weighed herself, in order to satisfy his curiosity about the weight of this woman. The computer announced instead of her weight, "one at a time." The weighing machine's maximum capacity was 200 kg. When she climbed the platform the computer thought that more than one person mounted the platform together.

In Serious Trouble

A pious bishop who does not eat meat, or smoke or drink alcohol had pain in his chest. Many of his priests advised him to go to a hospital. He was not willing to do so. Yet on repeated requests from his clergy he went for a check-up.

The doctor diagnosed his trouble as heart disease. He advised the bishop: "Don't worry. Nowadays we have good medicines for cardiac diseases. If you give up three things in life, you can lead a normal life. You have to give up drinking alcohol, smoking and eating meat."

The humorous bishop quipped, "Then I am in serious trouble." "Why?" asked the doctor. The bishop said: "I have not even one thing to give up" not to speak of three.

22. Hip Hip Hurray !

There was a priest who was not on good terms with his bishop. He disliked not only his bishop, but also his family.

The Church did not have chairs or benches in the area where the worshippers stood for worship. There was a chair for the bishop in the altar. Nevertheless, recently some chairs were kept in the vestry for old people or special guests who might find it difficult to stand throughout the service or to squat on the floor during the sermon.

On a festival day the priest noticed three members of the bishop's family standing in the Church. The parents and the uncle of the bishop, being old, could not comfortably squat on the floor. As the service had already commenced, the priest could not leave the altar. He whispered in the ear of his deacon, "Three chairs for the bishop's family". The old deacon couldn't hear properly. The priest repeated "Three chairs for the bishop's family".

The deacon turned to the worshippers, remembering Boys-Scouts-days and shouted joyously : "Three cheers for the Bishop's family." An amused youth among the worshippers responded, "Hip Hip Hurray, Hip Hip Hurray, Hip Hip Hurray."

1. Magician's Mango

Once a magician in Kerala met a foreign missionary. The magician thought that he could perform a few tricks before the foreigner which would create a good impression about himself and fetch a gift from the foreigner.

The magician took a mango seed and showed it to the foreigner. He claimed that he could create an illusion if he planted the seed and a mango tree sprouted quickly and gave a few mangoes. After this impressive show of magic he asked for a gift.

The foreigner asked in perfect innocence. "Why do you want money from me? You can sell those mangoes which you showed me now on your tree and make enough money without begging like this or playing other tricks,"

2. I am King David

A decently dressed gentleman approached a priest and got engaged in a discussion on Biblical topics. As the priest was busy he decided to give him one of the books he had written on King David and the Old Testament.

The stranger returned after one week with this book. He said, ' Father, I liked your book. Actually it looks

you are a good author. Some of your statements really profound. But one statement is wrong.

"What is that?", queried the scholarly priest.

"Oh, your statement that King David is dead," answered the visitor.

"Why do you think that King David is not dead?" asked the priest.

"Because", said the visitor, "I am King David."

25. Changing Times

A retired clergyman was invited to speak in a theological Seminary. He was happy to meet the young Seminarians and the clergy who were contemporaries of his son. At the very outset the old clergyman asked the students: "Do you know the real difference between the clergy and the laity?"

One smart student got up and said, "Reverend, I do not know what is the real difference between the clergy and laity today. But I know what was the real difference in your generation." The old clergyman was amused at the response of this student and asked, "Tell me, young man, what was the difference between the clergy and the laity in *my time*?" The young man answered, "None of the clergy in your time was a woman."

26. Precept and Practice

A priest, Fr. Thomas, used to preach against buying lottery tickets. One day while he was travelling by train

A handicapped man approached Fr. Thomas and requested him to buy a lottery ticket. But the priest confronted him with the evils of buying lottery ticket and many people becoming poor.

The lottery agent was clever. He said that if the priest did not buy his last unsold ticket, he would be poorer by one rupee. He convinced the priest that he could help this handicapped person buying the last unsold lottery ticket.

The next day as the lottery tickets were drawn the first prize went to this priest; but nobody made the claim. The priest could not trust anybody. He might claim the prize of half a million rupees.

After three days a man in police uniform came to the treasury and claimed the money. The officer who knew that the prize was in favour of a priest asked the policeman, "Why do you come, the prize is for a priest?" The priest replied, "I am the priest, but I had to disguise myself for coming over here. My people would ridicule me by claiming the prize, as I had condemned the buying of lottery tickets many times from the pulpit."

7. Off-Season Discount

There was a community where consumerism was the catch word. Shops began to offer commissions and reduced rates. The "sales" boards appeared in front of many shops. Customers searched for maximum reductions.

One clergy man suffered due to lack of members in his Church. His salary was not fully paid every month.

He announced in the local newspapers : "My Church offers 5% reduction on all Church contributions. Church tithe will be only 5% instead of 10% demanded in other Churches." It worked. Many misers changed their membership to this Church.

28. Never Put off Till Tomorrow What You can do Today

Eli Perkins, a 19th century American humourist, tells the story of a young clergyman who took giving advice to his parishioners seriously.

Not long after the young clergyman took charge of his first parish, he had to conduct a marriage ceremony in his church. John and Mary who had already obtained the marriage license stood before the altar in front of the young clergyman. The clergyman, fresh from the theological seminary, remembering the marriage guidance class he had attended, asked, "John, do you know that it is a very important responsibility to be a husband? Have you given serious thought to it?" He said, "yes". The clergyman turned to the bride standing next to him and asked her, "Do you realise that it's a very important step you're taking Mary?"

Hearing such repeated warnings from the clergyman, both John and Mary suggested, "Perhaps, we had better wait awhile." The inexperienced clergyman could see the marriage fee vanishing before his eyes. He was quick to change his strategy. He said, "Yes, ofcourse, it is solemn and important, but it is a very happy time, after all, when people love each other. Shall we go on with the service?"

Without waiting for any response from the couple quickly solemnised the marriage.

4. Office Upstairs

Dr. Brackett was to marry Miss Elvira Cromwell, daughter of a banker. But as Dr. Brackett went to attend a sick Mexican child in a poor family and got delayed, Miss Elvira called off the wedding. Dr. Brackett never married. He found satisfaction in helping the poor and needy. He never made money.

The doctor aged seventy died on the sofa in his office. The people of the town buried the penniless physician. They talked about raising funds to erect a suitable tomb memorial for this selfless doc. The doctor had been living above a store where a board was hanging "Dr. Brackett : Office Upstairs." One day the father of the poor Mexican boy whom Dr. Brackett had saved on his proposed but cancelled wedding day, took this name board and put it on the grave. People who came to the cemetery were amused to read "Dr. Brackett: Office upstairs."

5. Ticket for Washington

A pastor went to an underground train station in New York city and asked the booking clerk: "I want a ticket for Washington." The confused clerk replied, "Pastor, this is the underground train station. This train does not go to Washington" The pastor replied, "Yes, I know it. What I wanted was a ticket for my son Washington."

6. Ethics—Pure and Simple

Ethics was a word a boy heard in his high school for the first time. The boy went home and asked his

father what "ethics" was. The father who was a business man replied, 'Ethics is simple.' If somebody gives Rs. 100 extra by mistake, ethics decides whether I should tell my business partner about it or not.

32. Playing the Family

A little girl and a little boy decided to play family. The girl was 6 and boy 4 years of age. They said, 'We are Mr. & Mrs. Paul playing the game.' They rang the bell of the neighbour and the girl said: "I am Mrs. Paul and this is Mr. Paul." "We are playing the family game." The neighbour went to get some biscuits and cool drinks. When she returned from the kitchen with biscuits and cool drinks the girl said: "Madam, thank you very much. We are going home. My husband has wetted his pants. I want him to change his pants."

33. Don't Worry, Mother

A young girl was having a date for the first time. Her mother said, "Darling, I am worried about your first date. Be careful with the boy. The boy will take you for a dance. He may take you to the balcony and count the stars, then go for a walk to a lonely place and put his head on your shoulders. Then you should be careful." The daughter said, "Don't worry. I will take care of myself." When she returned the mother asked, "How was your date?" The girl said "Everything was fine. After many dances, he took me to the balcony counting stars. Then after a walk we sat down. Before he got time to put his head on my shoulders, I put my head on his shoulders and let his mother worry."

On Fridays Fishermen only

A Catholic missionary in Africa taught the cannibals that they should not eat meat on Fridays. Only fish was permitted on Fridays. After many years the missionary returned to Europe.

The cannibal chieftains gathered in council and discussed food habits. After a long debate they decided that they should eat animal meat on regular days and on Fridays they should eat only fish.

Work-Load

Pope John XXIII was a witty Pope. Once he was asked: "How many people work in Vatican?" Pat came reply: "Nearly half of them."

To my Father's House

A priest fell sick one Saturday evening. The bishop called a young priest and told him to conduct the service the next morning and preach the sermon. The young priest prepared the sermon. The bishop was also present at the altar for the service.

The young priest prepared the sermon early morning and came to the church to impress the bishop with his sermon so that he might get posted in a large parish. His topic was the parable of the prodigal son. The opening of his sermon was dramatic.

The text was St. Luke's gospel 15:18.

"I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him,

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,"

The young priest read the words "I will arise and go to my father", but could not read further. Nervousness overcame him. Looking at the bishop, he began to sweat and shiver. Somehow he repeated the words "I will arise and go to my father." He couldn't go further.

He decided to return to the vestry and disappeared from the gaze of the bishop and the congregation before fainting. Looking at the priest returning to the vestry the bishop shouted, "If you get to your father's house please convey our greetings to those up there."

37. Say Good Evening in Geography

In a village, a child went to the neighbouring city school. The child was happy to learn many subjects. He told his grandma that he was learning many subjects like geography, history, mathematics and so on. Grandma was proud of the achievements of her grand child. When the boy's father came home in the evening, the proud grand mother who was under the impression that all the subjects such as geography, history, mathematics etc. were names of different languages the child studied at school, told the school boy, "Johnny, tell your father good evening in geography."

38. A Thousand Candles!

One night a poor man's wife was in labour pains. The man did not have even one candle to light the room. He sat outside with his son. When the woman began to cry in pain, her husband prayed aloud. "If the delivery is safe, I will light 100 candles in our Church."

As he heard the cry again, he promised another 100 candles to another Church. Thus he promised about 1,000 candles in the ten Churches in the neighbourhood. The little son was confused. He asked his father, "How can you light 1,000 candles, when you do not have even one candle to light up this house?"

The father replied, "Son, don't worry about 1,000 candles now. Let the delivery be over, then we can think about candles."

Bible Quiz

A Protestant Pastor was transferred from one city to a small parish. He did not like the transfer because there was no good school in the area for his son who was studying in the High School.

The assistant pastor had influenced the Church Committee to put pressure on the bishop to transfer this pastor and to post the junior in his place. The pastor knew the unfair role played by his assistant in the "transfer" business. The Church Committee organised a farewell reception to the outgoing pastor and to welcome the assistant who was promoted as pastor. The committee members spoke how good their pastor was and how sad they were at his departure from the parish.

In his farewell message the pastor opened his Bible and began reading the story of Abraham taking Isaac for sacrifice at God's command. He read out Genesis 22:5 aloud.

“Then Abraham said to his young men here with the ass, I and the lad will go yonder worship, and come again to you.”

The pastor looked intently at his assistant who read the word “ass,” which brought a roar of laughter from the audience. The assistant pastor was not at all disappointed. He knew that his word would be the word as he was to propose the vote of thanks at the meeting. Looking at the organizers of the farewell meeting the assistant pastor read the words of Jesus from the gospel of St. John 10:8,

“All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them.”

40. Thames Station

A little boy was taken to London for the first time. After being shown some of the sights he expressed a wish to see THAMES STATION. “Don’t be silly,” said the mother, “there is no such place.” “Oh yes there is,” insisted the boy. Every night in my prayers I say “lead us not into THAMES STATION.”

41. Mistaken for a Gentleman

A bishop dining at a hotel asked the person sitting next to him to pass the pepper and salt. “Sir” said the man, “Do you mistake me for a waiter?” “Oh, no,” was the reply, “I mistook you for a gentleman.”

42. Man’s Last Love

P. Shiv Shankar, a former Union Minister in India while retiring from the Rajya Sabha on 12 Aug. 1990, recalled an English adage:

“In the case of a woman, she remembers her first love but in the case of a man, he remembers his last love.”

Mr. Shiv Shankar said that politics was his “last love.” He would remain a politician. Before becoming a politician he was a judge in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. Now he does not want to go back to his first love, his legal profession.

Whisky & Castor Oil

There was a bishop who used very colourful diction to describe human actions. He was against drinking any alcoholic beverage. He was equally averse to drinking castor oil which his physician had prescribed for relief from constipation.

One day the bishop reluctantly gulped down some castor oil at the instance of his physician and instantly told him, “Do you know the difference between whisky and castor oil?” Caught unawares the physician had no adequate answer. The bishop declared in triumph, “One is a talkie and the other is a movie.”

Playing Mother

Sindhu and her brother Sanil were playing inside the house. Their mother was busy cooking dinner. Sindhu's noise grew louder and louder.

The annoyed mother shouted, “Sindhu, why do you scream like the roof off? Play like Sanil. He doesn't scream like you.”

"Of course he doesn't," replied Sindhu proudly "that's exactly our game; he is Papa coming late am you."

45. After Pushkin

During my visit to Moscow in September 1991, my interpreter Prof. K. P. Matveyev, who lives in England now, pointed to a big hotel in Kremlin and narrated an event, he says, took place in that hotel. A Russian woman was working in that hotel. An African was staying in one of those rooms. The maid got pregnant from the wretched black African.

Nine months later the white woman gave birth to a black baby boy.

Looking at the black boy her husband demanded an explanation. The wife calmly and coolly told her husband, "Don't you remember my telling you once that one of my ancestors was Pushkin, the black man? My son takes after him."

46. I Saw you Stranded

In a monastery in Russia, the abbot was a strict disciplinarian. Neither did he smoke, nor did he tolerate others smoking. One young monk went home to attend some function. While returning he missed the bus. He waited on the roadside hoping that some private car would pick him up.

One private car came that way. The driver almost stopped the car. All of a sudden it accelerated and drove

him. Finally the young monk had to walk many miles to reach the monastery.

When he was absent at the evening prayer he had to give his apology to the superior. He explained all that happened including how a car was about to stop and sped away and why he could not make it to the evening prayer. The monk was not sure whether the abbot accepted his explanation.

The abbot realised the predicament of the monk, and said, "I believe your story, I was the man in the car who sped away. I will tell you why I did so. I saw you smoking a cigar. If I stopped there and if we saw each other, I was sure you would swallow the cigar to avoid punishment. I did not want you to do that. That is why I let you be stranded, the lesser punishment."

Touching Points

There is a local joke about boring preachers in Kerala. Whether it is real or apocryphal I am not sure. A young preacher went round different towns of Kerala. One day he was preaching near Kottayam, the listeners started leaving the place after ten minutes. The sermon was not very impressive. The young preacher had nothing new which he could say to that audience.

The only lady stayed. She was the only one left. There was no sign of any intention to leave the place. After an hour of non-stop delivery, the young preacher decided to quiz the lone listener: "Sister, what points of my sermon touched you and made you stay even after all the others had gone home."

The response was not friendly. "Don't dare to me? I am not interested in your touching me."

The young preacher was taken aback by this outburst. Still with a smile on his face he asked, "if you are not touched, why were you waiting here after all others had left?"

In fits of anger she said, "You did not touch me. I don't want to be touched by you. I only want to take my carpet home when you finish. You are standing on my carpet. You better stop now and let me go home."

48. Protected Christ

Some years ago a new Cathedral was built in Kottayam. Christ the King Cathedral. Atop the main building a statue of Christ was erected. Jesus stands there with hands outstretched, as if to bless the public of Kottayam.

There was a simpleton in the town who used to wander around the area for "alms". He used to make many comments on many matters.

He noticed the "lightning conductor" fixed near the statue. He did not know what that was for. After enquiries he understood that it was to save the Cathedral from lightning quite common during the monsoon season in Kerala.

Then came his announcement, "Look! Jesus Christ is protecting the town of Kottayam by his outstretched hands, but the iron rod by his side is protecting Christ!"

Why Preaching Loudly?

John Viani, the saintly Vicar of Ars in France, once held a meeting of the young people of his parish. He gave them a few pieces of advice to the youngsters. One of them stood up and asked a question to clear a long standing doubt.

This young man had noticed that the priest used to whisper whenever he preached in his Church and that the priest's words were not very audible whenever he said his prayers. The young man asked, "Father, why do you whisper at us, while you just whisper when you say your prayers to God?"

The pious priest replied, "When I speak to God, He hears even my whisper. But when I talk to you people, you do not seem to hear my words. Hence I have to whisper to be heard."

The Tallest Tree

Jyothi Basu, who has created history by serving as Minister of West Bengal for more than seventeen years, running, spoke of an experience before he became Minister. He was arrested off and on when he led demonstrations against the Government of the well known Congress Chief Minister Dr. B. C. Roy. Once Jyothi Basu asked Dr. B. C. Roy why his government was always arresting him whenever there was opposition or demonstration against the government. Dr. B. C. Roy replied, "Remember, lightning first strikes that tree which is the tallest."

51. The Ass's Jaw

John Mary Viani was interviewed by the Bishop of Ars in France. The bishop listened to everything the young aspirant to priesthood said and soon came to the conclusion that the young man would not be a fit person for the tasks ahead.

The bishop remarked that the youth was not short of an ass and should not be admitted to the Seminary.

The young man replied, "Bishop, if I am an ass, I will be very useful. Don't you remember the Old Testament story how Samson killed so many people with the jaw of an ass. If I am an ass, you can use me to conquer the enemies of the gospel."

The bishop was so impressed that he changed his mind and admitted the young man to the Seminary with.

52. "Why did you Become a Priest?"

There was an erring priest. He was very incompetent and could not attend to his responsibilities to the satisfaction of his bishop. Even the parishioners complained against his carelessness and incompetence.

The bishop called this priest and told him: "For many of your actions and sermons show that you are far from upto the mark. You should not have become a priest. Why did you come for priesthood? Why did you choose this vocation when you knew very well that you were not better than an ass?"

The priest jumped at the mention of the word "ass" and hastened to say, "You are right, Bishop. That is precisely the reason why I decided to become a priest. My parents also had told me that I was behaving like an ass. But I told them that Jesus had asked his disciples to bring an ass for his journey to Jerusalem. Jesus needed more of them and I offered myself to Him.

3. Two "os" and One "as"

On October 2, 1993 three new bishops were consecrated at the Mar Thoma Syrian Church in Tiruvalla, Kerala. At the public reception that afternoon, Prof. J. Kurien (former Central Minister) referred to the new names given to the three bishops at the time of consecration.

The names of these bishops were Barnabas, Timotheos, and Philexinos. Prof. Kurien remarked that two bishops got names ending with "os", while one got a different ending for his name.

Bishop Barnabas in his reply to the felicitations dwelt upon the endings of the episcopal names. He remarked that while the other two bishops had names with "os" endings (Timotheos and Philexinos), he had an "as" ending. It sounded the same as "ass." The audience burst into laughter in appreciation of the humour of Bishop Barnabas.

4. Joining the Catholic Church

Dr. D. Babu Paul I. A. S., proposed the toast at the dinner reception at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Kottayam to

the delegates of the *Pro-Oriente*, Vienna conference Kottayam on Oct. 2, 1993.

As Pro-Oriente is arranging study conferences in order to get the Roman Catholic Church and the East Churches to come closer Dr. Babu Paul narrated an incident which took place about the time when Patriarch Yacob III and Pope Paul VI issued a joint Declaration on October 27, 1971. He asked his fellow parishioner Trivandrum Dr. Ninan, Dean of the one of the science Faculties in the University of Kerala, "What would you do if the Patriarch of their Church (Syrian Orthodox Church) joined the Roman Catholic Church?" The well informed Professor replied: "Forget the Patriarch. I won't join the Roman Catholic Church, even if Jesus Christ joins them."

55. Eating Chocolates

A boy in Europe was eating chocolates from a jar for some minutes. After some time the boy began to weep.

His father came and asked, Why are you weeping? Aren't you happy? "Didn't you get chocolate from your mother this morning?"

The boy opened his mouth. It was full of chocolate. Still weeping he said; "Mother took away the one Kg of chocolates. She mistook it to be empty. There was one more chocolate left in it." His plan was to stomach one full Kg of chocolates. He could get only one chocolate less. That hurt him.

56. The Ten Commandments

There is an apocryphal story about the way God gave the ten commandments to Moses. God wrote down the ten commandments in two tablets and descended to the earth

He saw a German and asked, "Would like some commandments." "Please read me a sample," said the German. God read the 6th commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13). The German who was holding a gun in his hand replied, "Not interested."

God went to an Indian and asked whether he was interested in commandments. He too requested a sample. God read out the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". The Hindu said, impossible. We are rich in gods and goddesses. I can't give them up."

God next went to Paris and talked to a man in the street about His commandments. He demanded to hear a sample. Then God read the 10th commandment, "Thou shalt not covet your neighbour's wife." The Frenchman said, "Our culture will not permit that."

Finally God went down to Mount Sinai and saw Moses there. God asked him, "How about a few commandments?" Moses did not bother what they were about. A typical Jew, Moses was worried only about the cost. Moses asked, "Jehovah, how much is one commandment?" God replied, "You get it for the asking." When the Jew heard that it was free, he said with a grin, "Then I will take two." God gave Moses both the clay tablets, with the ten commandments on them."

2. Horse Power

Alexander Dumas suggested to Victor Hugo, the novelist writing a book jointly. Pat came the reply from Hugo, "How can you yoke together a donkey and a horse on one cart?"

Dumas was quiet to smite. He said, "Doesn't matter if you are not capable of writing a novel but why compare me to a horse?"

58. Christmas Sermon

Fr. Thomas the outgoing priest of a parish preached a Christmas sermon. Mrs. Jones, a member of the parish who was known for her hate for the old priest, telephoned to Fr. John the newly appointed priest, the next Sunday.

"Good morning Father, this is Mrs. Jones, an active member of this parish." "Father holding," said the priest. Mrs. Jones continued non-stop, "That Christmas sermon last week was of low standard. The old priest did not prepare the sermon properly. His delivery was poor. He was in a hurry to conclude the service and go home.

"I want to visit his new parish and tell the members there that this priest was an utter failure here.

"I am serious Fr. John; I am going to the new parish to tell the people about Fr. Thomas. What do you think?"

"Yes, I think you should go to that parish," was the response. It went on, "By the way, I am not Fr. John as you thought. I am Fr. Thomas, your old priest. I am continuing in this parish because the Bishop has cancelled the transfer order." The old priest heard something falling at the other end.

Dog's Meat

There was a gluttonous priest who was not satisfied with the food offered to him whenever he was invited by members of his parish on special occasions.

For the golden wedding anniversary of Mrs. and Mr. Thomas, the priest was invited for dinner.

Dinner almost over, Mrs. Thomas asked, "Father, do you like my cooking?" The gluttonous priest replied, "Oh, that the meat you cooked is just dog-meat." Sniped Mrs. Thomas, "Would you mind a third helping?"

John the Baptist

Sarah's father was a Baptist pastor. Her classmate's father was an Anglican priest. The girls were friends. The Anglican girl had heard that the Baptist members were baptised only after they were grown up.

Meela asked Sarah, "Where are you going to be baptised? In the Church or in the ocean?"

Sarah replied, "Not in the ocean. It is in a small

Meela again asked her, "Are you going to be baptised in the name of the Father, Son and John the Baptist?"

Sarah scolded her friend for her ignorance about baptism. She said all Christians are baptised in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and never in the name of John the Baptist.

61. Intelligent Basketing

One preacher narrated the miracle of feeding the thousand men by Jesus mentioned in the Gospel St. John Chapter 6. He wanted to test what the attitude of the present generation to a similar situation would be. He asked his audience what they would do if Jesus had repeated this miracle in a gospel meeting where 5000 men were present.

The treasurer of the gospel committee jumped to his feet and answered, "Pastor, first we would fill twelve baskets, keep it aside and then only distribute to the five thousand men. Men are so greedy now that there wouldn't be anything left if we waited till they finished eating."

62. Holiness

A teacher was talking about the holy river Ganges in India and holy men who bathe there to be holier. While the teacher used 'holy' several times, one student got up and queried, "Sir, what do you mean by holy river or holy man?"

The teacher was surprised that an Indian student should be ignorant of this word 'holy' used so often by teachers and preachers. He asked with righteous indignation, "Can anybody say what 'holy' means?" A naughty boy got up and volunteered a reply, "Holy or holy river is the person or river with many holes."

63. Give a Bath

It happened in Sri Lanka. It was narrated to me by the father of the family. They had a statue of Vi

the Mother of Jesus, in their house. One day the lady of the house was dusting the statue. Her four-year-old adopted girl came to help her. The lady said, "What a lot of dust! Come on, Let us dust it clean."

The girl who used to play with the neighbouring children and added some new words to her vocabulary. She said, "Mummy, let us give a bath to this beggar."

She Weakness

A Biblical scholar who had a flare for English literature narrated the history of Samson from the Book of Judges, Chapter 16. He explained the great strength Samson had. He also mentioned the beauty of Delilah, a woman who stole not only the heart of Samson, but also the secret of his enormous physical strength. "In a nutshell," the teacher concluded "Samson was a hero with a she-weakness."

Edification

Archbishop Theophilus had an encounter with a Desert Father called Abba (Abbot) Pambo. Abba Pambo was visited in the North African desert by Archbishop Theophilus. But Abba Pambo did not speak to him. Concealing his deep disappointment the Archbishop finally said to Abba Pambo, "Father, say something to me, Archbishop so he may be edified." The pious monk wrote on a writing board, "If he is not edified by my silence, he will not be edified by my speech."

First Operation

Antony Cardinal Padiyara was asked to say a few words in the Bishops' Ecumenical Conference held in Kottayam in October 1993. It seems that it was the first

time the Cardinal was attending a Conference where Catholicos His Holiness Mar Thoma Mathews II and heads of many Churches were attending.

Among the Bishops of Kerala, Cardinal Padiyil was one of the few who are well known for humorous speeches. He began with the story of a patient who required an operation. The patient was very nervous when he was on the operation table. "Why are you so nervous?" queried the friendly surgeon. The patient replied, "Doctor, this is my first operation. That is why I am nervous." The surgeon responded calmly, "Don't worry, this is my first operation too."

The Cardinal commented that he felt like that young surgeon. His final words were drowned in the episcopal laughter.

67. An Organist

An evangelical magazine published an advertisement "An Organist Required. Apply immediately." Mr. Thomas applied without much delay. He received an interview card.

When Mr. Thomas was interviewed he was asked whether he was willing to serve on a lower salary than what the previous organist was paid. Mr. Thomas replied, "I am an organist for the Lord, I am willing to serve on a sacrificial salary." About his past experience he claimed that he was an organist in two areas and Church members were satisfied with his hard work. Mr. Thomas was appointed as the organist. He was asked to report for duty the next Sunday, which he did ahead of schedule.

Half an hour before the service the pastor led him to a seat in front of the organ. Mr. Thomas began to play. He said that he did not know anything about musical instruments. As an "Organist" his duty was to organize religious camps for youth and Sunday school children.

Only Few Friends

St. Teresa of Avila had a hard day one day. She was tired after hard work. Her feet were aching. She prayed to Christ complaining about pain, "O God, what a temptation."

God responded at once, "This is the way I deal with friends."

"No wonder", Teresa murmured, "Lord, you have few friends."

Three Fishermen

An innocent and pious looking Catholic priest was transferred to a city. The Protestant pastor and the Jewish rabbi in that city welcomed the new comer.

The three went fishing on Fridays. The new priest had been invited to join the other two clergymen in this non-religious avocation. The Catholic priest was not involved in non-religious activities. Nevertheless he joined them remembering that Peter and some other disciples of Jesus were fishermen.

Their favourite location was on the river bank close to a place where bath room facilities were available.

After a few hours of fishing the Rabbi went to the bath room. He walked a few feet on the water to the room, on the river bank. The Protestant pastor, some time, took the same route to the bath room.

The Catholic priest also wanted to go to the room. He was scared of water, as he did not know to swim. Still he remembered that Jesus had walked on the water. With rosary on his hand he started walking towards the bath room. Soon he fell in the water. His friends pulled him out.

The confused priest asked his friends, "How did you two managed to walk on the water like Jesus. I couldn't do it?" The two replied, "There are occasions when you have to look down. See, those stepping stones under the water. Carefully walk on it. You would have performed a miracle."

70. Fifty Fifty

A husband complained to his priest about the misbehaviour of his wife. He wanted the priest to recommend to the bishop to obtain him a divorce, but it had become impossible for him to live with her.

He presented a long list of the errors of omission and commission on the part of his wife. The priest intervened to say, "Mr. Joseph, you should not put all the blame on your wife for the failure of your marriage. Perhaps you can say 50% is her fault." The husband hastened to comment, "Yes father, I don't put 100% blame on her. As you said only 50% is her fault. The other 50% belongs to my mother-in-law."

Risk Covered

A greedy pastor always demanded a fee of \$50 before he completed a marriage ceremony. He did not ask for it before the ceremony; but only towards the end before he pronounced them husband and wife. He used to show an offertory plate in which the couple were to deposit \$50.

During one wedding ceremony the couple did not have cash with them. So the bride wrote a cheque for \$50. When the pastor showed the offertory plate, the bride placed the cheque for \$50. The pastor was not sure whether this cheque would bounce or be cashed. To avoid any risk, or delay, he said, "I pronounce you husband and wife, provided this cheque is encashed."

Qualities of the Father

A girl fell in love with her college mate. She told her mother about this boy. The mother insisted that she should meet this young man. They met. She talked with her future son-in-law for one hour. After the boy left, the mother called her daughter and told her to drop her plan to marry this boy.

"Why mother?, He has all the qualities of my father," protested the girl.

"You are absolutely right. That is precisely why I do not approve of this alliance. I know the qualities of my father more than you do and only I know the hell I am going through ever since we got married. I do not want you to go through the same."

73. Not Biblical

In a Protestant Theological Seminary, two students kicked up a row, each arguing that his denomination was more biblical than the other's.

The Methodist student asked the Baptist, "Have you heard about Charles Wesley who wrote about 6,000 Christian songs and John Wesley his brother who founded the Methodist Church? The Wesley brothers are very famous in the Protestant Churches." The Baptist Christian asked his Methodist friend, "Have you read your Bible? Haven't you come across John the Baptist?" When the Methodist friend replied in the affirmative, he asked, "Have you read about 'John, the Methodist' in the Bible?" The Methodist student replied, "No". The Baptist student declared, "Your Church is not biblical".

Note: This student did not know that his Baptist denomination did not have any connection with John the Baptist.

74. Christmas Auction

A Protestant Church used to auction a Christmas cake after Christmas midnight service. Every parishioner considered it a privilege to be the buyer of the huge Christmas cake auctioned publicly.

Mr. John, a rich old man, wanted to be the highest bidder to possess the prestigious cake. But he was mistaken. He started planning how to get the Christmas cake cheap at the auction.

The assistant pastor gave his advice to Mr. John to sit in the front row during the Christmas service. When the pastor begins the auction he can keep quiet. After some time when the auction is in progress and when the pastor says something like Auction 1, Auction 2, Mr. John should jump from his bench and say "Rs/-, Auction 3 the cake is mine."

But before the service was over the pastor announced scripture reading Acts 1:2 and repeated the words of Acts 1:2 Mr. John jumped and said "Rs. 100. Auction 3, 3 and the cake is mine."

Nearer the Church

A clergyman known for his enthusiasm in visiting the members of his congregation hurried to a hospital to visit Mr. Thomas who was very seriously ill.

After prayers, Thomas told the priest, "Father, I think this is our last meeting, because the doctors had given their verdict that I would not last long, maybe two or three days."

"Thomas, don't you have hope? We Christians will meet in heaven. You should have that assurance. Otherwise what is the use of all my preaching in this congregation?"

"I know it, Father. Your preaching in our Church should not be in vain. We all have assurance that we all will go to heaven. But I was wondering whether you would be seen there. They say, "Nearer the Church is Nearer to God."

76. Burial Fee

A woman asked an Anglican priest whether he could conduct the burial of her dog. The priest felt it an insult and replied, "I am busy now. You better ask the pastor of the Baptist Church on the opposite side."

She asked the Anglican priest whether the Baptist pastor would demand more than \$5000 as burial fee. When the priest heard \$5000, he smiled and told the woman, "Sorry, I was a bit absent minded. I should have known that yours was an Anglican dog. As such I had better conduct the burial myself."

77. Hang Them Together

During the election to the Church committee, the members of one Church were sadly divided into many groups. They started canvassing for their candidates and began to spread allegations against the opponents.

The pious pastor called a prayer meeting and started praying aloud, "Lord, help all our members to hang together." One member of the Church said, "Lord, hang all of them." The pastor continued his prayer, "Lord, hang all of us together in perfect accord and perfect concord." The member added: "Hang all of them with one chord, a perfect chord, lest they break away."

78. For Favours Received

Queen Elizabeth of England visited India where Dr. M. Rajendra Prasad was the President of India. Dr. Rajendra Prasad presented a copy of his autobiography

the Queen. Looking at the large size of this book, Queen Elizabeth asked in amazement, "How could any one write such a large book? How did you find the time to write it?"

The President of India replied with a smile, "It is a favour from your father. It was he (King George VI) who sent me to jail for long spells giving enough time for me to write this autobiography."

3. Till We Meet Again

Bishop John W. Sadiq, former Anglican Bishop of Madras, told the story of a rich generous man. He used to give generously to the Church and charitable institutions. The rich man's wife, however, did not support his benevolence of her husband.

When the rich man was getting older he wrote a will bequeathing half of his wealth to an orphanage. He knew that his wife would oppose such a huge donation. Therefore he registered the documents secretly and gave them to his lawyer to be read publicly at his funeral. The wife had no hint that her husband had such a secret plan about his wealth.

The rich man died and when the lawyer read out the will at his funeral the wife blurted out in anger. She publicly ordered the lawyer to have the following epitaph on her husband's tomb, in bold letters.

REST IN PEACE

TILL WE MEET AGAIN

80. In Their Footsteps

John and Jane were brother and sister. They used to be very friendly to each other when they were young. They played together. They attended Church service. They attended Sunday school classes regularly. The neighbours looked up to them and even envied these ideal children.

The parents were very happy about their son and daughter. Whenever the neighbours enquired of the parents the secret of their exemplary character, the parents claimed that they learned it from their parents who were very obedient and loving children as was often testified by the grandfather of John and Jane.

Gradually the children began to pick quarrels at school as well as at home. They became very naughty and noisy as they grew up. One day their father asked, "Where did you pick up this querulous nature? In School?" "No daddy", came their reply in unison. "We are trying to emulate you and mummy as we grow up."

81. This Organisation

There was a Protestant pastor whose needs were great. He used to make special collections for the manifold needs of his Church.

One day he announced a special collection. He did not specify the need for such a special collection, there were already two special collections during that month. The Church committee usually permitted the pastor to take a maximum of two special collections a month, that only in the event of an emergency.

As the offertory bags were passed from hand to hand the gaze of the worshippers were directed towards the man who did not announce where this special collection for Sunday would go. Realising the reason behind the negative looks of his people, the pastor said, "The special collection will go to *this organisation*" placing his hands on his oversized belly.

The Size of the Dress

In recent years it has become a fashion among girls in some European countries to wear dresses conspicuous for their shortness. Some parents did not approve of this modern trend.

Maya was a fashionable Indian girl in a foreign country. Her father who was a Protestant pastor could not take in all the western 'culture' as he had been brought up in an extremely conservative Indian society.

On Maya's 18th birthday her father wanted to buy a new dress for her. Since he was very busy and their interests differed he gave money to Maya to go and buy any dress of her choice. Maya went with her classmates to choose the dress.

When the party was in progress the father walked in to wish a happy birthday to his daughter. Stealing a quick look at the new dress he remarked, "Maya, either the dress is too short or you are not in it far enough."

Don't be in a Hurry

St. Isaac of Nineveh (or St. Isaac the Syrian) was a spiritual writer who lived in the second half of the

7th century. Although he belonged to the East Church, he was one of those who "had a delightful disconcerting way of crossing the normal ecclesiastical boundaries." (Sebastian Brock, *Sobornost*, VII 2, p. 79)

The advice St. Isaac gives to those who rush through their prayers and conclude many minutes before the scheduled time is interesting. Nobody may heed his suggestions. Anyway I find it justifiable to quote:

If you are tempted to start rushing ahead in order to get it over, go back to the beginning, and recite the verse that involves making a sign of the cross and repeat again. If you still cannot concentrate, stop reading, kneel down in prayer and say: "I do not want to count milestones, but to enter my marriage chamber; any path that takes me there, will I travel on. *op. cit* p. 87)

84. Some Day You Will Thank Me

In the Protestant Churches, unlike the Roman Catholics, the clergy are permitted to marry, if they wish. There was a bishop who was stingy when it came to the salary of his married clergy. The unmarried clergy objected to a higher salary to the married clergy. They held that the Church should pay less to the married. Their claim, although they did not press for it, was that their salary should be higher than that of the married clergy because they worked day and night for the Church only, as they did not have a family to look after.

Fr. John always used to blame the bishop for his reluctance to suggest an enhancement of the salary of

d clergy. Fr. John was not married, but he wished
y if the bishop could recommend an increase in
lary of the married clergy.

he bishop never conceded the request of the married
but he said, "Fr. John, you are now blaming me
se you can't get married with the salary the Church
ou now. But someday you will thank me for it."

Please Don't Pray for it

athachen was suffering from severe asthma. The
priest who was transferred to his area visited
chen. Within a few days the new priest came to
about the sufferings of Mathan owing to asthma.

n the 60th birthday of Mathan, he came to the
n and placed an offering of Rs. 100. He asked the
to pray for his long life. The priest who had
e fully aware of the bouts of attacks of asthma on
chen told him, "Matachen, Thank you for your
y offering of Rs. 100. I shall definitely pray for
ong life and especially for curing your asthma."

o Father", interrupted Mathachen, "Please don't
or curing my asthma. I used to quarrel with people
I got asthma. I had a bad habit of talking back to
ody even without no rhyme or reason. But after I
sthma, I have not got stamina or even a desire to
p a quarrel with anybody. So I am happy now
pray for healing my asthma, I am afraid that my
ature will come back to me and I will not enjoy
of mind which I have at present."

86. Don't be a Professional Photographer

William H. Willimon, Minister to the University Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry at Divinity School in the USA and the author of bestsellers *And the Laugh Shall be First* and *Last Laughs* was the speaker at the commencement address at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, USA in 1993 which was my *alma mater* during 1967-68.

This master in the art of making others laugh began his address by the saying that if any of the outgoing students at Princeton had been professional photographers they would be greatly disappointed in their Christian ministry for which they were equipped in the Seminary. With three years of theological training, graduates, armed with an M. Div (Master of Divinity) degree, were looking forward to enter into their various assignments in the different denominations they belonged to.

They had some fixed notions on the behaviour of the sheep they were going to be entrusted with. These young pastors expect them to behave as per the patterns of behaviour they would anticipate from pious religious people. But the people do not always act according to those set patterns. They keep moving. If you were a professional photographer, you would adjust your object within the frame on your lens. You would click the camera thinking that your object is fixed for the few seconds before clicking the camera.

"Be prepared. Your congregational members do not sit quiet. They keep moving." warned the preacher who makes millions of Americans laugh through his talks and books.

Brother in Christ

Rev. Joseph Sutton was to attend the annual conference of his denomination which was being held in a big city in the U. S. A. He had made hotel reservation sufficiently early.

After he decided to send Mr. & Mrs. Robinson on his behalf, Rev. Sutton telephoned to the hotel and got his reservation changed to the names of his substitutes. When Mrs. & Mr. Robinson arrived at the hotel they went to the reservation-desk to check-in. The receptionist looked through the original reservation list, but could not find the names of Mrs. & Mr. Robinson among the names registered to the conference.

When Robinson suggested checking the name of "Brother Sutton," the receptionist queried, "Is 'Brother' his first name?" Mrs. Robinson answered, "No. He is a Brother in Christ." Finally they found the name listed as "Sutton".

"Your First Name is Bishop"

When I travelled in the U. S. A. in 1993 my friend telephoned to the airport in Chicago to make sure that my flight for that day's flight was re-confirmed. The reply was that they could not find any reservation for Dr. Mar Aprem under 'M' nor under 'A'.

The airlines people enquired whether Mar was my first name or Aprem was my first name. My friend suggested that they try both names in their computer as I supposed to have a reservation and there was no reason why it should disappear from the chart so suddenly.

During the conversation my friend mentioned that his first name was a Bishop. So they got a clue. They checked his first name and found the name Bishop Mar Apre. My friend told me, "Your first name is Bishop and Mar Apre is your surname. When you change flight at Singapore, tell them that your first name is Bishop and Mar Apre is your surname. If you tell the truth the computers do not need the brains to discern."

89. A Million More in Ninety Four

A Church in America was celebrating its bicentennial in 1994. The committee made elaborate preparations for the celebrations. The inauguration was in 1993. Composers were asked to write a modern chorus to cheer them up for 1994.

A children's choir was organized. At the inauguration open-door function in 1993 they sang this special chorus cheering the church members for the upcoming conference.

"Welcome to the open door.
None too weary, none too poor.
Reaching out from shore to shore
A Million More in Ninety-four."

The audience appreciated the conference chorus. The choir-director bowed to the standing ovation from the audience and thanked the assistant pastor for his imagination and originality in composing such a melodious, meaningful and modern chorus. The priest had hard time controlling his laughter, but

his conference chorus of 1894 in his report. years ago their great grand parents had sung of Ninety-Four. That was 1894 and not 1994.

he has been a Liar

1992 an American lady visited New Delhi to have on with the businessmen in India. This lady was representative of some business organisation equi- to the Chamber of Commerce in India. The s magnates of New Delhi arranged a special n in honour of this lady.

e Mr Singh was the organizer of the dinner on arranged in New Delhi. After a sumptuous Mr. Singh said to the guests, "Ladies and en, I want to welcome our chief guest from a. She is a businesswoman in America. We, s people in India, are very happy to welcome her. to mention her qualifications to represent the s community in America. She is a *liar*. She has *liar* throughout her career. She has been a *liar* for s. I can say with confidence that she is a capable

e embarrassed American lady looked at the e to grasp their reaction to these strange words oduction. The audience was not embarrassed. ew *liar* was the punjabi pronunciation for lawyer.

Bush-Stalin

anti-communist priest in the U. S. A. was getting or baptism on a Sunday morning. The parents

were ready with their baby boy in front of the baptism font. The priest whose name was Bush was in vestments and ready to begin the baptism. "What do you wish to name the baby?", asked Fr. Bush to the parents.

"Stalin", replied the parents who had immigrated from Russia.

The priest was furious to hear the name of Stalin. "No, I cannot desecrate my baptism font by baptising a baby in the name of an atheist. You can go to Moscow and baptise the baby, there," mumbled Fr. Bush.

The parents retorted, "We have the freedom to choose the name for our son. It is not written in the Bible that the priest has any right to dictate the names for the babies of other parents."

After noisy arguments the priest and the parents came to an agreement that the baby would be baptised by the name Bush-Stalin, because the first name Bush would cancel out the second name, Stalin, consoled the priest.

* Written after getting inspiration from reading an article "A Baptism" written by the Italian humorist Giovanni Guareschi. His writing had earned him fame and money, as well as imprisonment on several occasions for making fun of Italian politicians.

92. Head or Tail

When the Protestants opened a new theological College to train young men for priesthood there was an argument regarding the title of the head of the institution.

any agreed that the title "Principal" would be appropriate as it is an educational institution.

An old priest who had been earlier a Seminarian in Catholic Church, argued for the introduction of the title of a Rector as it was the custom in all Catholic seminaries. But the Protestant colleagues argued that the title of Rector suggested a Catholic institution. Being fervent Protestants they could not tolerate such Catholic influence, so they chose the title of their theological College.

The bishop listened to these arguments and finally expressed his view, "I object to the expression 'Rector' very much that it would have a Catholic influence, but 'Rector' sounded very much like *rectum*."

You will Hang me Also

In an affluent church when a bishop died the church committee constructed an auditorium in his memory. To make his memory more visible they put a photo of the late bishop on the wall. The late bishop's successor was invited to bless the new auditorium and to unveil the portrait.

The committee was considerate to other late bishops who had served that denomination during the past century. The present incumbent was invited to unveil photos of all such bishops.

The present bishop was well known for his wit and humor. After unveiling the photos of all his predecessors he went to the microphone. He began his speech saying, "As I perform this duty and as I look at

the photos of my predecessors on this wall, I have no doubt in my mind that one day you will hang me also."

94. A Shot in the Arm

When an old bishop visited his old parish, the local newspaper which has a reputation for using picturesque diction wrote that the bishop gave the Christians in the town a shot in the arm. When this news item was translated to an old pious Catholic layman, who was not aware of this idiom shouted, "blasphemy."

The newspaper reporter contacted the old man about the cause of his sudden reaction. He said vehemently, "The bishop will not shoot anybody. Even if he shoots for self defence, why should he give a shot in the arm? He should shoot below the knee. I do not think that the bishop is a cruel man to shoot anybody, not to think of everybody as the newspapers wrote. Lastly, why should he shoot Christians only?"

95. Duplicate Bishop

In crowded towns in India it is difficult to have a seat in train without prior reservation. Bishop John has the habit of reserving the seat for long distance journey by ordinary second class.

One crook named Malhotra had managed to get a visitor's card from Bishop John. The card was actually stolen from a man who had gone to invite Bishop John for a function and had collected his card to print his address in the invitation to the meeting which Bishop John was addressing.

During Christmas season when the trains were unusually crowded, Malhotra had to travel to Madras. At the Railway reservation chart he noticed the name of Bishop John. He noted that seat No.5 was assigned to the Bishop. He sat in No. 5. He had never seen Bishop John, although he used to pass by the Bishop's house.

Five minutes after Mr. Malhotra occupied seat No. 5, Bishop John came to that seat and told the crook that seat No. 5 was his seat. Mr. Malhotra took out the visitor's card of Bishop John and claimed that it was reserved for him as shown in the reservation chart. Bishop John who was taken by surprise, decided to meet the Ticket Examiner. By the time Bishop John went to the other end of the compartment, the Ticket Examiner came and Mr. Malhotra got his seat confirmed by him. After five minutes Bishop John met Ticket Examiner and asked for his seat. The Ticket Examiner said, "Father, seat No. 5 is reserved for the Bishop and he has already occupied his seat. How can I give his seat to you?"

Bishop John did not quarrel. He went and stood at the other end of the compartment without disturbing anybody. Mr. Malhotra began to brag out this incident to those seated near him. One of the passengers knew Bishop John. He told the crook, "Do you know the man standing at the other end? He is Bishop John. I am his neighbour." Hearing this Mr. Malhotra got up and got out through the back door. The saintly bishop who saw everything came and quietly sat in seat No. 5.

96. I Will Ask Her

There was a pastor in a southern state of the U. S. A. where some white men have prejudice against the Black

people who are known as Afro-Americans. The Pastor the white people in the area developed the same social prejudice against the black Christians in the Church. Black people had separate Churches.

The pastor's daughter Jane wanted to throw a birthday party. She asked her father's permission to invite her classmate, Diane to their home for the party. The pastor asked Jane, "Is your friend white or black?"

Jane replied, "I will ask her. I have never asked her so far whether she is white or black."

97. Left of the Centre

I heard this story when I was in Moscow. It was narrated to me by a Punjabi. The story is about a Punjabi who was working in America. He was watching carefully on television the launching of a rocket in orbit.

The rocket was fixed erect, let us say, at 90 degrees. At the first attempt when 10 to 1 was counted down and the authorities said "Fire", the rocket did not take off from the ground. The Punjabi telephoned to the rocket launching station and advised, "Sir, I will tell you what you have to do. Fix the rocket not erect, but slightly tilted to the left side, about 80 degrees instead of 90 degrees. Then it will take off."

The space engineers asked the Indian, "Why do you think, that it will take off the ground when it is tilted to the left?"

innocent reply came from the Indian, "You see, some I had a scooter. Whenever I wanted to start I had to tilt it to the left and kick it hard, then it took off."

Your Husband?

A pious elderly lady once offered me a donation to the church fund in our Church. She suggested that I carry the gift as a bank cheque rather than cash, as travelling.

I went to the bank counter to obtain a Bank cheque which we call in India a D. D. (Demand Draft). The lady was a staff of the same bank and she was allowed to obtain bank cheques without any service charge.

The young lady at the counter looked at both of us and my church member handed over the cash and asked for a Bank cheque.

"Whose name is it to be issued?" queried the bank

"Bishop Mar Aprem", replied the donor pointing to

that young lady did not know bishops in our church. I explained. "Is he your husband?" queried the young lady. "Only husbands and wives of the staff are entitled to exemption from service charge."

"No, he is my bishop," answered the pious donor. She blushed like a young Indian bride.

99. Can She Laugh?

Rev. Joseph was a young Protestant clergyman, an eligible bachelor. He met a devout woman willing to be a partner in the ministry. He went to his bishop to get his advice and blessings.

The bishop asked him, "Do you think that Latha, whom you propose to marry, will be a suitable girl for you?"

"Yes, bishop. She is educated and healthy. She is a devout Christian and a Sunday school teacher. She cooks. She drives a car. So far as I can gauge she will be a perfect wife for me," explained Rev. Joseph.

"Can she laugh?" queried the jovial bishop.

"I do not know. But why do you think that the ability to laugh is a quality to be a perfect wife?" asked Rev. Joseph.

The bishop with a smile on his face opened his Bible and read Proverbs 31:10-25.

"A good wife who can find?

She is far more precious than jewels.

.....

.....

Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the time to come."

* Latha is the name of the heroine in the celebrated Indian novel *A Suitable Boy* written by Vikram Seth.

. Sleeping Dose

Fr. John was a lazy parson. He was a lousy preacher. Whenever he was appointed to a new parish, reports reached the bishop that their new priest was preaching sermons without any preparation. Many people were fast asleep when Fr. John started preaching. Sometimes even after the service was over, the worshippers were sound asleep on the pews. The Church warden had the unpleasant duty of waking them up and sending them home before locking the Church.

The angry bishop called Fr. John and shouted, "I will terminate your services if the worshippers happen to fall asleep during your sermons. Your sermons are poor and not worth listening to. That is why they sleep."

Fr. John calmly said, "Was St. Paul a poor preacher? A young man not only slept but even fell down through a window and died during his sermon. (Acts 20:9) Nobody even fell down and died during my sermons."

. Smile A While

A young priest with a doctorate in theology from a foreign university joined a diocese, under a bishop widely admired for his sense of humour in both secular and religious spheres. Seeing the academic credentials of the young priest, he was appointed to one of the largest parishes under the bishop.

A few months later he was transferred to a rural parish. After a short stint in the village he received further orders from the bishop. This time it was not

to a church but to the administrative office of the diocese. The young enthusiastic priest decided to question the transfer.

He asked, "Don't you know that I have the highest theological qualification to be a pastor of any parish in your diocese? Why do you keep transferring me around? I am a misfit to the pulpit? How can I use my talents in the office? I am asked to sit in the diocesan office and just to look through the figures in the budgets?"

Sensing that the young priest was very much aggrieved over this transfer to the office, the bishop said, "Young man, you have the highest theological degree. But you have never learned to smile. That renders you unfit for the pulpit. Learn to smile and I shall send you back to the parish."

102. Clerical Concerns

St. Jerome who died in 420 A. D. was one of the great monks who wrote many deep theological works. The Roman Catholic Church is very much indebted to St. Jerome's erudition.

I have always thought of this great scholarly man with awe and devotion. I never thought that he had a lighter side. Once he described a critic of the Christians as "big and fat, a fellow bloated with Scots porridge."

When St. Jerome criticized the clergy of Rome and Antioch, he cryptically commented:

"All their anxiety is about their clothes... You would take them for bride grooms rather than for clerics; all they think about is to know the names and houses and doings of rich ladies."

03. He Who Laughs

Feodor Dostoevsky was a Russian writer well known internationally. He prescribes a yardstick to measure a man, to decide whether he is good or bad. I do not know whether all my readers will agree or not with this following method to assess a man's goodness. Nevertheless, Dostovsky has a point to make.

"If you wish to glimpse inside a human soul and get to know a man, don't bother analysing his ways of being silent, of talking, of weeping, of seeing how much he is moved by noble ideas; you will get better results if you just watch him laugh. If he laughs well, he's a good man."

04. Ph. D., D. D., ASSs

Fr. Robinson was transferred to a new parish. His formal education was very limited. But he was a powerful teacher and a successful pastor in all the parishes he had served.

In the new parish also he started with confidence. But most pastors in that town were highly qualified with degrees from both secular and religious universities at home and abroad.

The young people in Fr. Robinson's parish came to know that their pastor did not have any academic degree, not even honorary degrees. The young people began to make fun of this priest calling him the least educated clergyman in town. The pastors of other denominations in the town sometimes indulged in "showing off" on the

strength of university degrees to the deep disappointment of Fr. Robinson.

One day he decided to hit back in his sermon. He shouted at the top of his voice from the pulpit :

"I am the only clergyman without academic qualification. I know it. This town has many competent clergymen. Yet this town has no Christian values. The Church is becoming dead day by day maybe because almost all the preachers in this town are Ph. Ds, D.Ds and A. S. Ss."

105. Check Versus Bill

An American bishop visited his British counterpart. One day the former invited the latter for dinner at an expensive restaurant in London. It had been agreed that the American bishop host the dinner and pay the bill.

When the dinner was over the American bishop called the waiter and demanded, "check" instead of "bill" as the British people usually say. The waiter thought that the American was going to pay by cheque instead of cash. The British bishop knew very well that restaurants in that area did not accept cheques. They settled bills only in cash. Therefore the British bishop told his American friend, "Excuse me. May I lend you some cash?"

"Why? I have enough cash with me," replied the American.

"Then why did you say something about 'cheque' just now?" queried the confused English man.

It was a late revelation for the American bishop he was to ask for 'bill' instead of 'check' while in India.

6. Run Out of Gas

A British pastor went to do higher theological studies in New York. While living there he married his classmate, an American girl.

One day when he came to his apartment from the office, his American wife said, "Dear, we have run out of gas."

"Good, so we can go out to Restaurant to eat dinner today. I was waiting for an excuse to go out to eat." This was the happy response of the English man.

The American wife got confused. She asked, "How can we go out when there is no gas. There isn't enough petrol in our car to reach the gas station even." "Now I get it. You don't mean cooking gas. You mean petrol. I thought we have run out of gas in our kitchen." The Englishman was not aware that the Americans say gas or gasoline for petrol.

7. Economy in Space

A serious discussion was going on about the limited space in the Christian cemeteries in India. One Church was facing a crisis because almost all the burial lots were occupied already by Church members for constructing houses.

Permission for extension was not granted by government following protests from the neighbours who objected on grounds of health and hygiene.

The Church committee requested the bishop to give his advice on how to tide over this difficulty. There was space for only ten more people to be buried in the cemetery. The bishop known for his wits remarked, "I see there are burial lots for 10 people only. I suggest you allot it to 60 people and ask the priest to bury upright only."

108. Ever Black

K. J. Yesudhas, the renowned playback singer, was speaking at a function in Galilee in Thrissur in 1993. He was also on the platform to release a new audio-cassette of devotional songs. Yesudhas is the greatest singer in Malayalam and is an idol of respect to the millions of Malayalees. (The total population of Malayalam speaking people is around 25 million). Many young people grow beard in the style of Yesudhas. Several upcoming singers try to imitate the hairstyle and gestures of this talented singer.

Because of my interest in history I found out the year of his birth. He was born in 1940, the same year in which I was born. But he is a few months older. As we sat on the same platform I stole a look at his beard which was attractively black.

I got up to speak at the function. The audience included many Yesudhas fans. I said, "Looking at our beards you may conclude that I am much older; as my

has silver streaks. But I have news for you. has is a few months older, although his beard is black." In his reply Yesudhas stated, "Bishop, I tell you what brand of dye I am using, if you are interested."

Not to Repeat my Sermon

Fr. Joseph was a young priest who preached well-rehearsed sermons. His bishop was busy on a Sunday morning. He couldn't get time to prepare a sermon. So the bishop telephoned to Fr. Joseph and asked, "Could you preach this morning in my Church? I am busy and have no time to prepare a sermon." "Yes, Bishop," replied Fr. Joseph.

Looking at his wrist-watch he realised that it was a tight decision with only one hour left. The congregation consisted of a city elite group. Fr. Joseph went to the pulpit and preached a pretty good sermon.

After the sermon some people complained to the bishop that Fr. Joseph delivered the same sermon which the bishop had preached two years back. The bishop asked Fr. Joseph whether his sermon was prepared by himself or taken from somebody. Fr. Joseph politely replied, "Bishop, you know that you didn't give me enough notice to prepare a sermon. I have taken an oath not to repeat any of my sermons. So I had no choice but to steal your sermon. You remember, you had commanded me once for repeating my own sermon. It prevented me from repeating my own sermon. My sermon is one which I preached for the first time."

110. Highest Tax Payer

Mr. Joseph was a reasonably rich man in a town in Kerala. When the newspapers reported that he was the highest income-tax-payer in his state, the bishop phoned to him and congratulated him.

"You are fortunate to be the person who made the highest profit this year," said the bishop. The profit for that particular year amounted to over ten million rupees. The bishop praised him for his determination and hard work in an area where labour unions often bargain for exorbitant wages and businessmen often fail to make a profit in white money.

Mr. Joseph replied, "Bishop, I am not fortunate to make the highest profit this year in our state. I may even be described as 'unfortunate'. Many consider me a fool. I write in my account books all my profits and pay income tax to the government. I am the highest income-tax payer; but definitely not the highest profit maker."

111. Two Sermons at One Time

A priest from Kerala went to study in England. After studying for some years he took a doctorate in theology. When he returned to his homeland, he was posted to a parish outside Kerala where he used to preach in English only.

Later when he became a bishop in an area in his home state where preaching in English would be outside the comprehension of the majority of Christians. Therefore the new bishop decided to pre-

much difficulty, in his mother tongue. But he had
searched hard for suitable words to express his ideas.

When he was invited to a city parish he hesitated to
preach in his broken Malayalam and suggested that he
should preach in English and the local priest should
interpret. The parish priest who was a fiery speaker in
Malayalam gladly welcomed the opportunity.

The bishop started in confidence because he was
fluent in English. He went fast. The priest couldn't
keep up with the bishop. Yet as a fiery preacher, the
priest didn't give up. He kept on interpreting uninter-
rupted. Within a few minutes the bishop who knew
Malayalam realised that the priest was not interpreting
correctly, but was giving an almost parallel speech. At
the conclusion the bishop who had an international
reputation for humour declared, "Today you must be
tired because you have heard two sermons instead of
one."

You Look Better

There was a bishop who had a high opinion of
himself. He knew how to encourage his Church
members. He claimed that he had taken courses in
psychology and personality development when he was a
student in the Seminary.

He decided to meet two of his old friends who had
become very successful as television stars. He went to one
of them and said, "Friend, you look great on television. The
public wouldn't know that you are such an ordinary
person in real life." That comment disappointed him.

because he had a feeling that he was handsome in life, without any make-up. Looking at his friend's the bishop realised that his remarks were not relished.

The next day the bishop went to the second friend. As soon as they shook hands the bishop said, "Friend, You have recently become very handsome. You are more attractive in real life than what we see on television often."

The friend gave a sorry look at the bishop, fearing that his make-up on television shows does not give him any face-lift. The bishop was dejected that both his friends did not welcome his remarks.

113. The Visible Difference?

On 12 March 1994 thirty two women were raised to the rank of full priesthood in the Anglican Cathedral in Bristol in England. Since it was the first time the women were fully "priested" in the Anglican Church in England, it became news. It was reported to be the first instalment of about one thousand women slated to be ordained.

So far women were ordained only as deaconesses. There are a few nuns too in the Anglican Church. There are many graduates in theology among women. In the Anglican Church outside England there were already women priests in recent years and a few lady bishops.

As the author was a guest in the Lambeth Conference of the World-wide Anglican communion on 1 August 1988 when the august assembly voted to permit women

be bishops, he was interested in the developments in England where more than 700 clergy and some bishops threatened to quit the Church rather than be assisted by dictators or by women priests or bishops.

Looking at the photograph which appeared in the newspapers in India of the first women priests wearing robes like priest, this bishop mused that the only physical difference that is visible is that the stoles worn by the nuns in a crooked manner have been straightened when they were now priested.

4. Give us Some Medicine

Fr. Alphonse Mingana (1878-1937) was a Chaldean Catholic priest from northern Iraq who became a Quaker in England. He was a great Syriac scholar who translated many books from Syriac to English. He was known as Fr. Mingana in England.

Dr. Mingana did not hold a doctorate degree, either earned or conferred. But being a great Syriac scholar, he was called by other scholars as Dr. Mingana. He did neither claim that he had a doctorate, nor did he deny. The following humorous story was told by him in his talk on 1 March 1934 at the 'Cambridge Theological Society.' This interesting episode took place probably in his second journey in 1925.

"We began our journey, and reached a small village which separated the new frontiers of Syria and Iraq. My passport had to be stamped there, and I went to the Arab official, who had near him a little urchin who could read Roman characters.

Our kindly officials at the Foreign Office had written, on the first page of my passport: "Dr. A. Mingana". On hearing the word "Dr", he asked me to take a little rest, as I was tired, in a room near by.

About an hour later, he told me that my passport was ready, and to my astonishment, when I went out to continue my journey, I found myself surrounded by people affected by almost all the diseases under the sun! Some were cripples, others had head-ache, ear-ache, stomach-ache etc. They began to shout: "Doctor! Doctor! for the sake of God!". It was no use explaining to them that I was not a Doctor of Medicine, and so I had to empty for them almost all my small medicine chest, composed mostly of quinine and kindred medicines."

115. My Torch for you

Moothampackel Kochukunju (d. 1945) was a powerful revival preacher not only in his own Mar Thoma Church but in any Christian denomination in India. He preached many revival sermons in Kerala and Tamilnadu. The spiritual songs he composed are sung in many Christian conventions even today.

One day he was preaching a powerful sermon on the second coming of Jesus Christ. He explained that nobody knew the day of Christ's second coming. In order to hammer his point harder Kochukunju *Upadesi* (Malayalam word for evangelist) challenged his listeners. He promised, "I would present my torch to anybody who

uld say with conviction that Jesus Christ would not
urn today."

Usually nobody dares to enter into an argument with
s frail but powerful preacher. Nevertheless, a young
n got up from the audience and walked towards the
eacher saying, "I know definitely that Jesus Christ
ll not come today, because the famous Maramon
nvention* has been arranged for next week." He took
o torch from the preacher and triumphantly walked
ay.

6. Just Converted

Gipsy Smith was an evangelist. Some people
iculed him as he was an old fashioned evangelist.
vertheless he continued his old fashioned preaching.
his sermon at Winona Lake, U. S. A. Gipsy Smith
vited his adversaries to go and live with him and watch
w his old fashioned preaching worked.

In the city of Johannesburg, the preacher said, the
st convert was "a tall, big fellow." He once walked
m the enquiry room straight to another Dutchman. He
ok out his pocket-gold-watch and asked his friend, "Do
u recognize this watch?"

"Yes, that is my property. I lost it eight years ago."

* Maramon Convention is the famous revival meeting held annually in the third week of February on the river banks of Pampa in Central Travancore near Maramon. At present about one and a half million believers attend one or more days of this 8-day-convention where famous international preachers provide leadership 1994-5 is the centenary year of this convention.

‘No, you didn’t lose it. I stole it. I knew you would never suspect.’

His friend questioned him, “Are you crazy?”

“No, I just got converted, and here is your watch.”

117. Moses and Bush

There is a story about President George Bush of America after the Gulf War of 1991. The American President was meeting the Israeli Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was late by a few minutes for the consultation. He apologised for the delay. He said, I was praying to Jehovah and was talking with Moses.’

“Moses? That guy to whom God gave the Ten Commandments? He must be a great guy to be able to deliver his people from Pharaoh, King of Egypt. I want to talk with Moses if you can arrange an interview. I want to meet that desert hero who deceived Pharaoh about 3300 years ago”, said the hero of the Desert Storm Operation around Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

“I have to ask permission from Moses. During my evening prayers I will ask Moses whether he could find time to talk with you,” politely stated the Israeli Prime Minister.

The next day when they met the Israeli Prime Minister told President Bush, “Moses said that he was not interested in talking to Bush. He had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years when he last talked to a bush!”

118. Prayed Them Out

Dwight L. Moody, the well known American preacher of the last century, once spotted two little girls playing

an underground cellar in Chicago. Moody went to the bar keeper and requested him to send his children to his Sunday school.

The bar keeper laughed and asked Moody, "Do you know where you are. An infidel club meets here every Thursday night." Moody was in no mood to admit defeat. He went on urging the bar keeper to send his children to his Sunday school.

The father of the girls finally challenged Moody to come to the club the following Thursday night to have a discussion with the club members. "And if you win", said the bar keeper, "you shall have the children; but if you lose it is all off."

The next Thursday night Moody was there with Tommy, a crippled boy who could pray effectively. The room was packed to capacity by the members of the infidel club. Moody began, "Gentlemen, it is our custom to open our meetings with prayer." He motioned Tommy to jump up on a barrel and pray.

Tommy prayed with tears rolling down his cheeks. After hearted people began to disperse. Gradually everybody left the place. Moody said, "That will do, Tommy." Then Moody claimed the girls for the Sunday school. "They are yours according to the contract," said the bar keeper, "but it is a queer way to fight."

"It is the way I win battles", explained the evangelist. He had instructed Tommy not to cease praying until he had prayed them all out.

119. Splint, Sponge & Honeycomb

There was a witty bishop who was never satisfied with what his Church members gave to the Church. In his opinion the people in his Church were stingy. At their harvest festival he used all his abilities to persuade people to change their attitude with regard to giving to the Church.

He used illustrations. "In my first diocese the people were like flint", recalled the bishop. "In my second diocese they were like sponge. But in my present diocese you people are like honeycomb", remarked the bishop watching the reactions of the people present.

Elaborating his remarks the bishop explained. "You have to hammer hard if you want to get anything from the flint. In the case of a sponge one has to squeeze. But in the case of honeycomb it overflows with its sweetness." The bishop watched the smiles on their happy faces. As he was liberal in praising his present congregation, the people were lavish when they wrote cheques as their contribution for the harvest festival.

120. Funeral Procession

Philipose Mar Chrysostom the 76-year-old Suffragan Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar is well known for his witty comments. He wrote the foreword to my book *Bishop's Jokes*. In Maramba Convention in February 1994 he made fun of the craze of some parents in Kerala in sending their children to English-medium-schools. Since the English-medium Schools are few and far between the students are

ported to the school campus which may be 3 or 4 miles outside the town, by the special school buses owned and operated by the school authorities.

Every morning the buses go around the town to pick up students from different parts of the town. These buses do not run like regular buses which ply along certain specified routes. They don't pick up regular passengers. They pick up only their students who have come for the bus transportation. They go zig zag inside the town before they get out to their school situated in the suburb.

The bishops in Kerala, when they die, are taken in a procession through the streets of the city for the faithful members of the Church to pay their respects. The dead bishop is placed on a throne or a high chair in a sitting posture attired in crown and staff. (They are buried also in that sitting posture. That is why the bishop's grave appears like a half grave, about three-foot length instead of regular six-foot-graves).

Bishop Chrysostom contended that the condition of English-medium-school children in our country is worse than the corpses of the bishops. The bishops are taken in procession in town only after they are dead. But school children are paraded in the town in the school uniforms while they are alive, very much alive.

Joking German

A German missionary was appointed to teach in a Theological Seminary in India. He was not fluent in Malayalam. The Principal appointed Fr. Mathew to interpret from German to Malayalam.

The missionary had a high opinion of himself as capable of lecturing on dry theological subjects with humorous illustrations. But he was disappointed that students didn't even smile after he had narrated two or three jokes. The missionary felt that the students did not laugh because Fr. Mathew's interpretation was defective.

Fr. Mathew came to know that the German missionary was trying to get Fr. Mathew transferred and have a more qualified interpreter in the Seminary. Fr. Mathew, to escape a transfer, conspired with the students. Whenever he interpreted the classes of the German missionary he would occasionally say "that is a joke" if there was something sounding like a joke, the students should once start laughing.

That day onwards the classes of the missionary ran with laughter especially because the students knew that they were laughing at the missionary and not with the missionary. The interpreter too had a hearty laugh with the certitude that his job was secure for the time being.

122. Slightly Bigger

Boys at a young age used to be admitted to a monastery in Europe. The boys grew up in an atmosphere where they never saw beautiful girls or women. The only person of the fair sex who had admission to the neighbourhood were the ugly old women workers in the fields.

One day the abbot took the boys of the monastery to the local church. Some beautiful girls were seen walking on the road. The boys began to stare at these girls.

'What is that?' asked one boy pointing to a smiling looking at him. The abbot replied, "Oh, it is like a hen in our chicken shed. This one is slightly bigger than the others." The abbot tried to change the subject.

"Can we take it to our chicken shed?" It looks nice and beautiful. Maybe it will lay more eggs!"

The abbot dragged him to the other side.

War and Peace

During World War I (1914-1918) Henry Ford, the American philanthropist conceived the idea of a Peace ship. He gathered a group of people committed to the cause of peace in the world.

The Peace ship sailed from America to Europe. They were determined to proscribe war. The idea of a Peace ship at the time of World War I was intriguing indeed. Henry Ford was delighted that his Peace ship was sailing on smooth waters with a noble vision.

But before the Peace ship was long at sea human nature became manifest. The peace-mongers began to quarrel with each other and the ship returned shattering Henry Ford's hope to pieces.

A High Potency Dose

There was a preacher who endeavoured to find a remedy for every ill, spiritual or profane, in the Holy Bible. One day he was talking to a homoeopath about the various systems of treatment such as allopathy, homoeopathy, naturopathy and other native systems of medicine.

The preacher asked, "Do you know when the first caesarean operation was performed?"

The homoeopath replied, "It was some years before Christ when Julius Caesar was taken from his mother's womb by an operation."

The preacher enquired, "When was the systematic homoeopathic treatment used first in public." The homoeopath did not have much to think. He replied "Samuel Hahneman of Germany was the first doctor to come out with this system in which he startled the world with his theory "Likes are cured by likes."

The preacher did not agree with the reply of the homoeopath. He said, "Moses was the first known homoeopath. He lived about 3200 years before Samuel Hahneman. Moses put brazen serpents in the wilderness and the people of Israel bitten by serpents were healed by gazing upon these serpents. (Numbers 21:9).

The homoeopath was left wondering about this way of the cure of serpent-bites by serpents—like curing like.

125. Wait your Turn

On Tuesday 31 August 1993 I flew from Los Angeles to Tokyo. As the aircraft was airborne the hostesses distributed newspapers which they had picked up from Los Angeles - I got *Los Angeles Times* dated August 31 1993. My attention was captured by a heading in the front page of Section B. The caption read "A L.A. Riot." The news of Los Angeles racial riot had spread like wild fire not only in the US, but also in other parts of the globe.

What is a laugh Riot? I mused. At the top of this le a clue was given. "Aftermath. Inner-city youths to find humour in their tough lives through stand-comedy. A state-funded programme is designed to self-esteem and build confidence,"

A 10-year-old James Cummings came to the stage says:

I went to my friend's house and asked where his restroom was—I had to go *real* bad."

James showed running and ducking motions for basis. He continued in front of a rollicking audience young people.

"He said : 'Down the hall and turn to the left.'

So I ran down there and opened the door. But a big cockroach was sitting on the toilet. The cockroach threw a tissue at me and said, 'Wait your turn! Wait your turn!'"

. "Hello" be thy Name

Rev. Hancock has an over-smart daughter named na. One day she listened to her father saying lo, Hello" many times while calling somebody over telephone. Sheena did not get any idea who he was ng to. She did not hear anybody's name except lo, Hello?"

When the telephone conversation was over, Sheena l her pastor-father, "Dad, were you 'talking to God? e," replied Rev. Hancock. "I know who you were ng to," insisted Sheena. "How do you know? I didn't

even mention his name during our conversation, because the caller did not want anybody to hear his name. Realising his feelings I avoided mentioning his name."

"But you did mention his name", argued Sheena. "No, I didn't" was the emphatic stand of the pastor. "Tell me what was the name of the person I talked to," demanded the father. Sheena smilingly stated: "It was God you were talking to."

"How on earth did you jump into such weird conclusion," queried the father. The smart daughter said: "I heard you say, 'Hello, Hello, good morning. This is Rev. Hancock.'"

"But why do you think it was God," was the genuine doubt of the confused pastor.

"Don't cheat me, Dad. Every Sunday I hear you reciting the prayer, 'Our Father who art in heaven 'hallowed be Thy name.....'"

127. Attention Please

A young man in Africa got converted to Christianity. He went to attend service in the church on Sundays. He had noticed that after conversion to Christianity some of his friends were dressed in western style. They wore shoes also.

This man who took his name Anto (for Antony) decided to be dressed up decently. He got shirts and trousers stitched in western style. At a shoe shop he tried a pair of good shoes on his feet. The shop keeper

satisfied that it was the right size Anto bought it.

After attending church service the following Sunday, Anto came to the shoe-shop and asked to get his shoes mended. "Why?" questioned the confused shop keeper "It fits perfectly well, doesn't it?"

The young man stated, "It does not squeak. I want shoes which make noise when I walk in the church. I go through so much trouble to go to the church and nobody takes notice of my presence."

3. Status Quo Ante

An Assyrian had a grudge against another Assyrian. We call them Ashur and Nimrod. Ashur was told by a physician that he had cancer and his life span after chemotherapy was only about six months.

Ashur went through the excruciating pain of the disease. His priest visited him and gave him peace to spend his last days in a spirit of reconciliation.

An Assyrian priest had known of the love lost between Ashur and Nimrod. He suggested to Nimrod that he should forgive and forget everything he had against anybody especially his old friend Ashur. With some persuasion Ashur agreed to reconcile with Nimrod. "But", said Ashur, "The fault is on the part of Nimrod. I was always right. Nimrod was wrong from the beginning."

Nimrod agreed to go to Ashur if the priest accompanied him. Finally Nimrod and priest went to the house

of Ashur. The priest stated, "Ashur is about to leave this world. Nimrod, will you reconcile with Ashur so that he may depart in peace?"

"Please forgive if I have done anything wrong to you. Let us part in peace as good friends which we were for long," said Nimrod to Ashur who was in his last moments waiting for the final call.

Ashur was quiet. The priest said, "Ashur, did you hear what your friend Nimrod has said just now?"

Ashur murmured, "Yes, I want to die in peace with you, Nimrod." The priest was happy and offered a prayer of thanks for the spirit of reconciliation both showed.

As Nimrod was bidding good-bye, Ashur said, "If by some miracle I do not die now, our relationship is back to square No. 1."

128. The Wise Women of Edessa

Prof Hamilton Hess of California (He was an Anglican clergyman in England before he changed over to Catholicism) was one of the main speakers at the *Mesopotamia Light* seminar in Modesto, California in May 1992.

The Professor was speaking about St. Ephrem (Mar Aprhem). He narrated Mar Aprhem's comment when a woman in Edessa told Mar Aprhem the new comer to the city men should look to the dust, the place of their origin while a woman has every right to look at the body of a man, as that was the place of her origin.

'Oh, if the women of Edessa are so wise'', said Aprem, "how much more wise the men of Edessa be." The women in the audience laughed when Hamilton Hess said the first part. The men laughed when he completed the sentence.

. No Other = Mother

When the joke No. 55 in this book was typesetted in Press a funny thing happened. I usually read fully three or four times the final proof sheets in order to correct the mistakes committed by me, by my typist, as well as by the typesetters in our Press.

On p. 47 of this book I noticed in the machine proof sheets: "Thou shall have mother gods before me."

Had it escaped my attention, the advocates of the "feminist theology" would have had a hearty laugh and congratulated the young ladies in our Press who typeset and proof-read gally proofs. These workers would have been hailed as the propagandists of the feminist theology currently gaining acceptance in some liberal circles.



Script: Here endeth my fifth book of humour consisting of 130 jokes. With the publication of this volume the total number of jokes narrated in my five joke books will total 718. The next two volumes may contain 141 jokes each to hit the thousand mark.

LIST OF JOKES

1. Shepherd's Age
2. Wife's Note
3. Undistracted
4. Moratorium
5. Just the Perfect Size
6. Somnambulism
7. Sleeping Pills
8. Utopia
9. Spare Diet
10. Send a Substitute
11. Situation Vacant
12. Comparatively Older
13. House Full
14. Memory Test
15. Remedial Teaching
16. Yes=No
17. Till we Meet
18. Self-Reliance
19. Solitary Exception
20. One at a Time
21. In Serious Trouble
22. Hip, Hip, Hurray
23. Magician's Mango
24. I am King David
25. Changing Times
26. Precept and Practice

Off-Season Discount

Never Put Off Till Tomorrow What you can do Today

Office Upstairs

Ticket for Washington

Ethics—Pure and Simple

Playing the Family

Don't Worry, Mother

On Fridays, Fishermen only

Work-Load

To my Father's House

Say Good Evening in Geography

Thousand Candles

Bible Quiz

Thames Station

Mistake for a Gentleman

Man's Last Love

Whisky & Castor Oil

Playing Mother

After Pushkin

I Saw you Stranded

Touching Points

Protected Christ

Why Preaching Loudly

The Tallest Tree

The Ass's Jaw

Why did you Become a Priest?

53. Two "os" and one "as"
54. Joining the Catholic Church
55. Eating Chocolates
56. The Ten Commandments
57. Horse Power
58. Christmas Sermon
59. Dog's Meat
60. John the Baptist
61. Intelligent Basketing
62. Holiness
63. Give a Bath
64. She Weakness
65. Edification
66. First Operation
67. An Organist
68. Only few Friends
69. Three Fishermen
70. Fifty Fifty
71. Risk Covered
72. Qualities of the Father
73. Not Biblical
74. Christmas Auction
75. Nearer the Church
76. Burial Fee
77. Hang Them Together
78. For Favours Received

Till We Meet Again
In Their Footsteps
This Organization
The Size of the Dress
Don't be in a Hurry
Some Day you will Thank me
Please Don't Pray for it
Don't be a Professional Photographer
Brother in Christ
Your First Name is Bishop
A Million More in Ninety Four
She has been a *Liar*
Bush-Stalin
Head or Tail
You will Hang me also
A Shot in the Arm
Duplicate Bishop
I will Ask her
Left of the Centre
Your Husband?
Can she Laugh?
Sleeping Dose
Smile A While
Clerical Concerns
He Who Laughs
Ph. D., D. D., ASSs

105. Check Versus Bill
106. Run Out of Gas
107. Economy in Space
108. Ever Black
109. Not to Repeat my Sermon
110. Highest Tax Payer
111. Two Sermons at one Time
112. You look Better
113. The Visible Difference
114. Give us some Medicine
115. My Torch for you
116. Just Converted
117. Moses and Bush
118. Prayed them Out
119. Splint, Sponge & Honeycomb
120. Funeral Procession
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122. Slightly Bigger
123. War and Peace
124. A High Potency Dose
125. Wait your Turn
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128. Status Quo Ante
129. The Wise Women of Edessa
130. No Other=Mother

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The Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mookken) was born in Trichur, Kerala, India, in June 1940. Educated in India, England and America, he specialised in the field of Church History. He was the President of the Church History Association of India.

He holds two master's degrees in Church History, one from the United Theological College Bangalore (M. Th, of Serampore, 1966) and the other from the Union Theological Seminary, New York (S. T. M. degree, 1967). He was a candidate for Doctor of Theology (Th. D.) degree at Princeton Theological Seminary, USA when he was made bishop in Bagdad, Iraq in 1968. Later he earned his D. Th. degree from Serampore University near Calcutta.

Ordained a deacon on June 25, 1961 he became a priest on the day he completed twenty five years of age on 13 June 1965. He was consecrated bishop on September 21, 1968 by Mar Thoma Darmas and promoted as a Metropolitan eight days later at Bagdad.

His biography appears in the International Who's Who of Intellectuals, Vol. 6, Cambridge, The International Directory of Distinguished Leadership, First Edition, U. S. A. and others.

He was given 'Men of Achievement' Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England in 1984 and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical achievements.

Since 1968 he is the head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organizations, all over India.